

FAIRHOPE  
*The Annals of a  
Country Church*



EDGAR DEWITT JONES



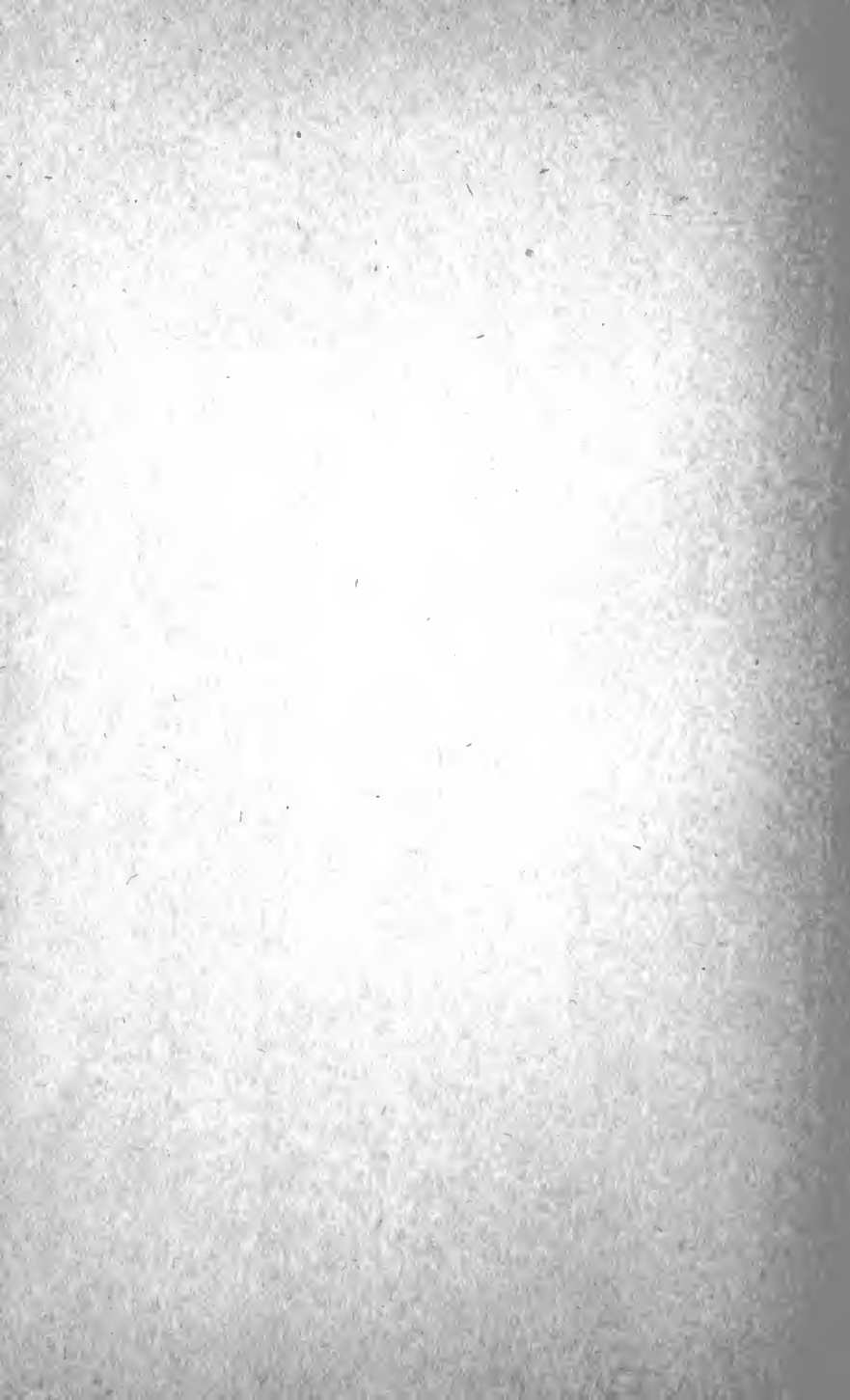
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FAIRHOPE



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"Out from the deep green its spire rose,  
Glist'ning white 'gainst the blue of sky,  
A house of prayer and peace for those  
Who worshipped there the God most high."  
*Will Harris Johnson*

# FAIRHOPE

*THE ANNALS OF A  
COUNTRY CHURCH*

BY  
EDGAR DEWITT JONES

FRONTISPIECE BY  
HERBERT DELAND WILLIAMS

New York  
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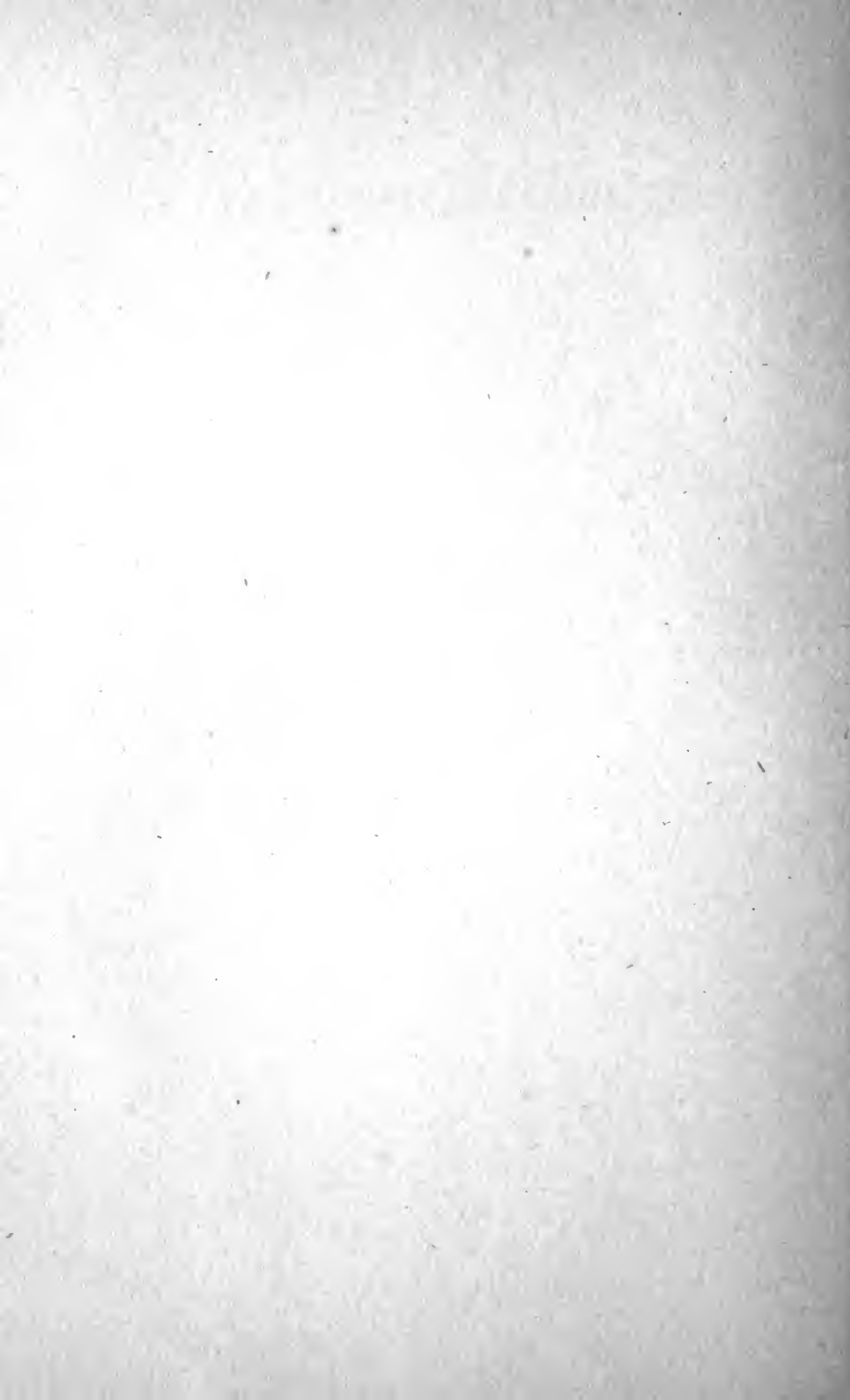
TO  
FRANCES  
OF  
FAIRHOPE





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## A YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT



## A YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

It has all come about — the writing of these annals, I mean — through the instrumentality of a man and a bird. The man is my minister, and the bird — but let that come later.

As for ministers, all my life I have known them intimately. Ours has long been known as a preacher's home, and one of our numerous ministerial guests christened it "the preacher's paradise." Though he phrased it superlatively, I question if any home was ever more hospitably disposed toward ministers than our own. Like the good woman of Shunam, who built a special guest chamber for the prophet, so according to my earliest recollections our roof has sheltered a preacher's room. The very first guest that I can recall was as Godly a minister as ever proclaimed the way of life eternal, and I cherish the hope that at the end of my earthly journey my filming eyes may rest on the calm countenance of a stout-hearted evangel of God who will commend my parting soul to the heavenly Father.

Of all the ministers I have known not one resembled Mr. Edgecomb; more formally, The Reverend Roger Edgecomb, who is my pastor now. Mr. Edgecomb does not look like a domine, nor does he dress like one. He is slightly above medium height, of a well-knit, athletic build. His face is bronzed from much outdoor life. His hair —

what there is of it — is of a reddish tinge, and his eyes are of a fine twinkling blue-grey. Mr. Edgecomb's every day suits are not of ministerial cut or colour. He favours a sack coat of norfolk style, invariably of greyish cast, and he actually wears khaki when he goes on his long tramps to the woods.

Mr. Edgecomb knows birds! That I found out the morning after his first night as my guest. Now, be it known that I establish a point of contact with our ministerial guests usually through some question of theology, a comment on our religious press, or a query as to some puzzling passage of Scripture. In Mr. Edgecomb's case, however, ornithology — not theology — opened the way to a more intimate acquaintance. He arrived on one Friday evening late, and I showed him to his room after only the briefest and most conventional conversation. The next morning at breakfast he stopped in the midst of lifting a crisp slice of bacon to his mouth, and exclaimed, "Ah, an ovenbird! Did you hear it say 'Teacher, *Teacher*, TEACHER'?"

I did hear it and I so informed my guest, and the while I was conscious of a rising tide of actual excitement. Other ministers had helped me in the explanation of difficult points of theology and obscure Bible texts. Here was a minister who might throw light on the mystery in the ravine just below the house and across Garrison Creek.

"Are you well up in bird lore?" I asked, my face mirroring my great new interest in my guest.

Mr. Edgecomb inserted a generous lump of butter between the crusts of one of Aunt Caroline's delicious biscuits before answering. Then smiling at me from across the table he replied, "Better, I fear, than I am in some fine points of theology. Are you a bird man, too?"

"Scarcely," I confessed. "Much as I love the birds, I have only a limited knowledge of the species. The commoner kinds I can identify of course; but there are birds that visit northern Kentucky every spring whose songs are familiar to me though the singers are not. And, Mr. Edgecomb, there is one bird in particular which I have heard every spring for practically all my life, and yet I am not absolutely certain that I ever laid eyes on him. I have a great curiosity to see him and to learn his name. His haunts are not five minutes' walk from this house. Will you let me take you there after breakfast?"

"Let you?" Edgecomb laughed with abandon. "Why you have excited me! I am keen as a hound that has just found a fresh trail. I have had breakfast aplenty! I am ready to go now."

So we set out together. Passing back of the house, we cut across a woodland pasture where a cardinal grosbeak in a thorn tree attracted Edgecomb and moved him to say, "There is only one thing more fascinating than a redbird in a green tree and that is two redbirds."

We scrambled down the sloping sides of a hill, crossed Garrison Creek at a point where I had con-

structed a primitive sort of bridge — a sort that went out with every freshet.

Through a little ravine heavily fringed with undergrowth and boasting here and there a fairly good-sized tree, we made our way. Suddenly there came from the denser part of the copse a saucy chuckle followed by a shrill whistle. We stopped short.

“That’s the bird!” I exclaimed.

Mr. Edgecomb put his hand on my shoulder. “Man, it’s a yellow-breasted chat. I don’t wonder that you were puzzled.”

“The chat is a shy bird,” he continued. “Common as he is, I dare say not one in a hundred thousand knows him by name. He is the enigma of the bird world. No one knows the chat intimately. Before I show him to you I can tell you all that the ornithologists know about the chat in less than five minutes. He belongs to the warbler family, and he’s rather a handsome fellow. His upper parts are olive green, his throat and chest are bright yellow. His sides are olive in colour and he has a white ring around his eyes. Male and female are marked much alike. Unlike the robin or blackbird, the chat is retiring; and for the most of the time he is in hiding just as he is at this very moment. His song — if song one may call it — is familiar to many who, like yourself, never saw the bird or if they saw him they did not know him as the singer of the familiar notes. I should say there are three distinct notes



## A YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT 7

in the chat's song: a saucy chuckle, a harsh, scolding cry, and a shrill, not unmusical whistle. He has other notes — many of them. He's a mimic. Yes, sir, the chat is a most eccentric fellow. He's versatile, a bit of a ventriloquist, and something of an acrobat. When he sees us he will bend back and forth on the limb and turn his head from side to side in a way that is comical. Ah, there he is at his scolding again! Come on and we'll spy out the beggar."

Cautiously we made a path through the underbrush. "There he is," announced my guide, and looking in the direction his finger was pointing I saw the denizen of the ravine whose identity I had not until then been able to discover. Mr. Edgecomb had described him accurately. I looked at the bird curiously. So this was the mysterious stranger I had so long been eager to know! Retreating further back into the underbrush, the chat bowed his head from side to side and twisted himself back and forth in a queer commingling of a serio-comic performance. For perhaps ten minutes we watched the antics of the chat, until seemingly offended by our prolonged intrusion he disappeared in a spot where the underbrush was thicker and darker; and from that security he scolded and chuckled to his heart's content.

Such was the happy beginning of my acquaintance with Roger Edgecomb: minister of the Gospel, nature lover, and best of companions indoors or out. From that day on he and I were often to

gether; we tramped over the farm and the surrounding country, and there is scarcely a nook or corner in the county that we haven't poked in and about. Under his tutelage I have come to know more accurately than I had ever thought possible, the birds of Kentucky. Numbering among my friends many ministers, with the advent of Edgecomb I began to write a new chapter in my life.

In the course of our long tramps it was but natural, I suppose, that I should give Edgecomb little by little the story of our community life; and especially of Fairhope church which is perhaps the best known of all the country congregations of northern Kentucky. In a way my delight in listening to him reveal his knowledge of birds and trees and flowers was paralleled by his interest in my simple narratives of our people, our preachers, and the lights and shadows of our rural religious life. It was on a day in the month of roses, after a half-day spent along the woods which fringe the Ohio River bluffs, that Edgecomb broached the subject to me that had been on his mind for some time. We were eating our lunch in the shade of a huge sycamore near the mouth of Garrison Creek. I had sketched for him some incidents in the life of an unique character who for nearly a half-century had been a pillar in Fairhope Church. When I had done Edgecomb turned to me, a more serious expression on his bronzed face than usual.

"My friend," he said, "there is one duty that

awaits your doing. For forty years you have lived in this interesting country and your life has been in and of a country church rainbowed by romance; a type of church, too, that is fast passing away forever. You ought to write down the story of Fairhope and so keep green the memory of an unique rural church life — a life that already belongs to another day and generation.”

I laughed the matter off lightly, and helping myself to another cold beef sandwich, sought to change the subject. But Edgecomb would not let me dispose of the matter in that way. He is a persistent fellow, I tell you, and usually accomplishes what he sets out to do. Nevertheless, not until he had spoken to me a half-dozen times perhaps, did I begin to regard the project seriously or view it with any favour. Even then I came to no decision and gave him no reason to believe that I would act favourable to his wishes; until there came a morning glorious beyond description, when I set out across the fields to look after some fence that I had been told was needing attention. From the hedge rows a brown thrasher sang with abandon. Farther off a mocking-bird surpassed the rival of the hedge row. Over in the orchard a cardinal whistled in sheer delight, and faintly from a nearby meadow came the plaintive song of a field sparrow. I felt the magic spell of the morning and my old love for that God-favoured spot welling up within me, reminded me of Edgecomb’s interest in my writing down a narrative that would embalm

the memories and glories of this community of northern Kentucky. And while I was thinking of this, there came from the midst of the thicket of tangled vine and pawpaw trees the sauciest of chuckles and then a shrill, flute-like whistle. *That* decided me!

And thus it came about: through the instrumentality of a minister and a yellow-breasted chat that I, David Westbrooke, rural churchman, sometime traveller, and hopeful bachelor, came to write down the story of Fairhope.

# FAIRHOPE MEETING-HOUSE



## FAIRHOPE MEETING-HOUSE

TRAVELLERS approaching Cincinnati from the west on railways that parallel the Ohio River, are certain to observe the high hills which like continuous fortifications mark the boundary of the Kentucky side. In winter these hills are bleak, bare, and austere. In spring they are lovely in apparel of softest green variegated by occasional bursts of pink and purple blossoms. In autumn they are robed in hues of russet and red, splendidly set off by splotches of yellow ranging in shade from a light lemon to deepest orange. Skirting the base of these hills and mounting them by tortuous windings, are the turnpike highways which lead to the fertile farms on the tableland at the top. The scenery along these river hills is rugged everywhere; in places it is picturesque in deep gorges, rock-bottomed, and bordered with profusion of wild and dark tangled underbrush. Rock beds crop boldly out on all sides, and often in fantastic formation. Indeed, the county of Boone has long been of especial interest to the geologists, who find here numerous and eloquent fossil relics of a militant, prehistoric life. This is particularly true of the southern part of the county where the land is rough and broken, forming a section known as the Knobs.

In this northernmost county of Kentucky, not far from the lordly river, and amidst a populous farming community, is Fairhope meeting-house.

I like much that quaint, old-fashioned name of meeting-house, loved and cherished by our New England forbears. It is a beautifully significant name; a meeting-house where men and women may meet their Maker, and so meeting Him meet one another in sweet and enduring fellowships. For very many years our people always spoke of the church building as the meeting-house rather than the church. Indeed, I can recall the time when to speak otherwise was to occasion suspicion of grave departure from "sound speech." But now I seldom hear this old-fashioned name for the House of God. Instead, the name "church" is in common and constant use. Thus do terms as well as customs change, and what was unorthodox phraseology yesterday is accepted as sound and Scriptural speech to-day.

From the window where I am writing I can see the slender steeple of Fairhope meeting-house which is all of a mile away. It is midsummer and here and there amid the thick foliage of oak and elm and maple I can discern part of the ridge comb of the high pitched roof, and nearly all of the slender spire. The present structure is the third in the six and fifty years of the congregation's existence. The first a plain little meeting-house, gave way to a larger and better appearing edifice in 1862; and the present substantial structure replaced the second, which was destroyed by fire in the fall of 1892.

The building is a frame structure, painted white,



with green shutters; and is rectangular in shape. It is considerably larger than most country meeting-houses and will seat comfortably three hundred and fifty persons. A tall steeple straddles the roof above the entrance and adds much to the appearance of the building. A double door admits into a vestibule; and within are two doors on either side, each facing an aisle. The interior is plain but substantial. The high backed pews are stained brown, as is also the pulpit desk. Flanking the pulpit left and right are pews running lengthwise and these form the "Amen Corners."

Fairhope meeting-house adorns a plot of ground richly favoured by nature. The building stands upon a pleasing elevation which on the one hand slopes gradually to Dry Creek, and on the other stretches out in level fields to the river bluffs two miles distant.

Dry Creek is deserving of a brief description since it is an interesting stream and does not belie its name. For the greater part it is of solid rock bottom, and with the exception of certain deep holes it is most of the time actually dry. But during heavy rainfalls and the sudden breaking up of winter, the creek rises rapidly and becomes bank full of swift running water in an incredibly short time. Forging Dry Creek after a heavy rain is always perilous and seldom necessary for the flood subsides as quickly as it rises.

In front of the church is the main travelled turnpike and on the side next the creek is a dirt road

which — like all such roads in our county — is ideal for driving in good weather, but in times of heavy rains or February thaws become almost impassable. Noble trees — elm, oak, and maple — shade the edifice and directly back of the building is the cemetery (an acre and one-half in area), where sleep so many of our blessed dead. An osage hedge fence completely surrounds the plot of ground on which the meeting-house stands, alongside of which are hitching posts and feed racks for the horses of the worshippers; and in these later days a parking place for automobiles. Less than two city blocks distant is a little cross roads village with a blacksmith shop, a general store, and a tobacco warehouse.

Looking east from Fairhope, one can see the distant hills beyond the Ohio River. To the south lie the fertile farms in landscapes of mingled woodland and blue grass pastures. To the west the hills of Indiana are just discernible on clear days; and the majestic river itself which borders this northernmost county like a great horseshoe, may be accurately traced for a part of its course by the trailing clouds of smoke from the steamboats plying up or down the stream.

Thus it is that the very name Fairhope is descriptive of the natural beauties of this rural church's environs, while suggesting as well the great spiritual entities for which it stands.

Yet, Fairhope takes its name not from the fair spot it occupies; nor yet again from that great

Hope which is as an anchor to the soul, and symbolised by every church building; but from old Colonel Fairhope who gave the two acres for the cemetery and church purposes. The Colonel was a veteran of the Mexican War and he lost his life in the great Civil conflict in the Sixties. He was a bachelor, the last of his line, and there is not a single Fairhope so far as I know in all the State to perpetuate the memory of the noble man. His dust slumbers not far away from the House of God which gives a certain immortality to a name which otherwise might have perished from the earth.

The reference to the name of Fairhope serves to remind me of the names of neighbours and friends who through all these years have been in and of Fairhope meeting-house. When I think of them I think of Fairhope; and when I think of Fairhope I think at once of the Throckmortons, the Boardmans, the Shelleys, the Walmsleys, the Robbins, the Brownings, the Johnsons, the Dodges, the Brookings, the Menifees, the Van Gorders, the Paynes, the Subletts, the Perrys, the Westbrookes — our friends and our neighbours, our kith and our kin.

I make no attempt to conceal my affection for Fairhope church. All my life has been lived in sight and sound of Fairhope's House of God, and the lives of those I know the best and love the most have been — and some are now entwined and intertwined about that country church's his-

tory. I know full well Fairhope's triumphs and failures, her lights and shadows; and as I write I seem to behold in long procession her preachers, her elders, her members young and old, good and bad, all heart of my heart, and life of my life.

I have travelled some both in my native land and in the Old World; and in my journeyings I have everywhere carried — even in Paris — my interest in things and places religious. I have worshipped in some of the great and historic churches of the New World and the old; I have listened to Alexander Whyte in Free Saint George's, Edinburgh; I have heard Reginald J. Campbell in the City Temple, London; I have sat in old Trinity, New York; I have worshipped in St. Paul's, and likewise in Westminster Abbey, London; and in one and all of these places set apart for praise and worship, and others not here named, I have felt in greater or lesser degree the presence of God. Yet in none of these have I experienced such exaltation of spirit, such elation of soul, as on many a Lord's day morning worshipping in Fairhope church in northern Kentucky with the glory of God's sunshine without, the cheery whistle of the cardinal grosbeak borne to my grateful ears through the open windows, and within the congregation worshipping God in simple peace and unaffected piety.

It is our custom to observe every Lord's day the communion of the Lord's Supper. Simply, yet with becoming reverence, our elders conduct this serv-

ice at the close of the sermon and the singing of the invitational hymn. Following brief but fitting comments on the origin and purpose of the institution, there is a prayer of gratitude for the loaf, after which the bread is broken and distributed by the deacons to the worshippers. In like manner, there is a prayer of thanksgiving for the cup; the goblets are filled from the tankard and the fruit of the vine passed to the people.

Then follows a hymn, usually "Blest be the Tie that Binds," and the morning worship is ended. To many, it is during this simple service that those emotions are experienced which Isaac Watts so well described in what is perhaps his greatest hymn:

"When I survey the wond'rous Cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride."

More than once or twice, or even a score of times, Fairhope meeting-house has been for me the Gate of Heaven, and all that John Milton's great cathedral with storied windows and pealing organ accomplished for him, so that unadorned House of God with rural worshippers has "dissolved me into ecstasies and brought all heaven before mine eyes."

As I write, two score years of Fairhope's history passes before me in moving pictures filled with familiar scenes and faces. After this fashion

do I behold Fairhope's life, sometimes in larger outlines, in sweet intimacies, virtues and sins, humours and tragedies; the whole softened by time and reflection as the summer twilight softens the landscape and haloes the commonest bush with glory and romance.

THE DAYS OF CONTROVERSY  
AND DEBATE





## THE DAYS OF CONTROVERSY AND DEBATE

WHOEVER writes of the controversial period in American church history must have a care lest he distort events or caricature persons who were as loyal to the cause they loved as were those brave knights when chivalry was in flower. The background of the polemics of a half-century ago and more has faded away and the atmosphere which imparted gusto to the doctrinal debates, has gone forever. These facts make it a difficult and delicate matter to deal fairly with a once popular and vital phase of religious life in the Middle West.

The early days of Fairhope were the days of controversy and debate. Our congregation was part of a religious movement which originated in a plea for the unity of all God's people by a "restoration of primitive Christianity, its doctrines, its ordinances, and its fruits." Practically all the older members of Fairhope were men and women who left the churches of their fathers in order to protest against a divided Christendom. The fact that their protest possessed the ironical setting of adding another body to the more than one hundred denominations already existing in America was not a condition of their making or wish.

Controversy, argument, and debate, were the natural order of those days. Disputation was held in high esteem. Ability to argue was a gift greatly to be desired on the part of the preacher. The

preachers of those days were for the most part skilled dialecticians. Often have I heard the account of a notable service in Fairhope's first meeting-house when a distinguished minister and scholar of national reputation was the preacher. The little building was crowded to the doors and many were unable to get inside. This eminent personage was at that time well advanced in years, a venerable and patriarchal appearing man, and during the delivery of his sermon he leaned heavily upon a cane. This distinguished man was a guest overnight in our home and the impression he left of courtliness and gracious personality was such as our family never forgot, and the memory of his visit is preserved by us to this day and cherished with pride. In American church history this eminent reformer is known chiefly as a controversialist, but he was much more. He was a scholar and a most gallant Christian gentleman. Unhappily, though, some who followed him were not so radiant of spirit and were fiercely argumentative and partisan in their defence of the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

The old-fashioned man who studied the Scriptures in order that he might argue with the preacher, is for the most part obsolete; but there were many of his kind in the early days of Fairhope. Giles Shockley was one such. Giles delighted to quiz the preachers young and old on Biblical topics. But Giles was practical in his purposes and spurned all fanciful queries or mere

catch questions. Others were not. "Where did Cain get his wife?" "What kind of a mark was it that God put on Cain?" "Did the angels have wings?" "If angels have wings why did they use Jacob's ladder?" These and kindred questions were launched at the preacher in those days, and if he treated them contemptuously or failed to make some sort of satisfactory answer, his stock was sure to go down in the estimation of many.

Thirty-five and forty years ago our county was an arena for debates on religious topics, some of which were of wide celebrity. At least three debates that were considered sufficiently important to warrant publication, took place in our county; and one of these in Fairhope meeting-house. These debates attracted great crowds and were the means of arousing intense interest. It is quite impossible for those who did not live through this period of religious controversy to understand the importance attached to the debates. They were outstanding events of those days. Prior to the debate there was usually a great deal of correspondence between the participants; a correspondence, too, of a serious nature and weighed down with a ponderous kind of solemnity. Whatever may be our views of these debates now, they were not held in light esteem by the men who engaged in them and proclaimed fearlessly their doctrinal beliefs. These debates were conducted with marked dignity and a great deal of ceremony.

The following "Preliminary Rules of Discus-

sion " of a debate held forty years ago in northern Kentucky, and widely attended, show the formality with which these meetings were conducted, and also the seriousness that characterised them as a whole.

1. The Debate shall commence at such time, and be held in such place, as the Debators shall decide when they meet.

2. Each Disputant shall elect a Moderator, and these shall choose a third, who shall act as President.

3. In the opening of each new subject the affirmant shall occupy one hour, and the respondent the same length of time — each subsequently shall alternately occupy half an hour, till the subject is disposed of.

4. The Debate shall open at precisely half-past nine o'clock and shall close at half-past eleven, A.M., each day; and in the afternoon commence at precisely one o'clock and close at four.

5. The Debatants agree to adopt, and be governed by, the rules of decorum found in "Hedge's Logic," page 159, a copy of which work shall be upon the Moderator's desk, for reference.

6. King James' translation of the Holy Scriptures, generally known as the common version, shall be the umpire on all Biblical questions.

7. The rules of interpretation laid down in the seventeenth chapter of "Hedge's Logic" shall govern the parties in their Biblical criticism; but either party may refer to other translations, com-

mentaries, and writings, to prove the correctness of his interpretations.

With these rules before him, one who never attended such a debate should be able to visualise the scene: the three moderators sitting in state, the two champions of serious mien, the formidable pile of books and documents on a nearby desk or table, the crowded building with the eager expectant faces and air of suppressed excitement. With such a setting for a discussion on Bible truths, it is not strange that interest in the religious debates was rampant fifty years ago.

At Florence, a little town twelve miles from Fairhope, there took place a notable debate between one of our champions and an equally able opponent from a denomination noted to this day for its zeal and orderly system. People came for fifty miles to hear these two celebrities in a series of discussions continuing three days. The excitement was at fever heat and many of the preachers from the large churches in Cincinnati and Covington were in attendance. Practically all of Fairhope's adult congregation was present at one or more of the sessions, and for days the principal topic of conversation in the community was this polemic event.

The opening session of this debate was featured by a choice bit of repartee worth recording here, both for its wit and as illustrating the spirit of these encounters. When the champion who opposed our man arose to make the preliminary

speech he said, "At last I am to meet the great gladiator of whom I have heard for years, but not until to-day was ever privileged to see. I am told that my distinguished opponent is a man-eater. I have been advised to watch him carefully, lest he devour me whole at one gulp. But now that I have seen him I am not alarmed. He looks mild and gentle. Still — I will not throw all caution aside until I have seen him in action."

With this kind of an introduction he plunged into the statement of the proposition he was to defend.

When it came time for our champion's rejoinder, he referred blandly to the opening remarks of his honourable and distinguished antagonist; and then deliberately and in the most solemn fashion, he admonished, "Let my brother and able opponent be calm. He is in no danger. He is as safe here as in the bosom of his family. I will not bite him for, like the Apostle Peter, I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

This sally made a decided hit with our adherents, and for the time rather took the wind out of the sails of the first speaker. Further on in the debate, however, the tables were turned in some similar manner on our champion, and thus the honours were evened to the satisfaction of the large and extremely partisan audience.

Another debate which attracted widespread attention was held six miles from Fairhope and at the county seat town. One of our ministers met

there a Universalist in a two days' discussion. Great throngs were in attendance and the interest was widespread. In one of our man's speeches he gave an unwarranted, but vivid and really extraordinary description of Dives in torment crying piteously for water; and at the close of the terrible portrayal he turned abruptly to his opponent and exclaimed, "Now, I've got him in hell, you get him out — if you *can*!"

The Universalist preacher arose and with that torrid description of his opponent as text, he proceeded to draw the most blistering caricature of the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked imaginable. And he clinched his points by reading dramatically what he styled a "perfectly orthodox hymn" which made the vivid description of our champion seem insipid and tame in comparison. That hymn is printed in full in the published volume of this historic debate, and is interesting as a theological curio:

"Behold, that great and awful day  
Of parting soon will come,  
When sinners must be hurled away,  
And Christians gathered home.

"Perhaps the parent sees the child  
Sink down to endless flames,  
With shrieks, and howls, and bitter cries,  
Never to rise again.

"O father, see my blazing hand!  
Mother, behold your child!

## FAIRHOPE

Against you now a witness stands,  
Amidst the flames confined.

“ The child, perhaps, the parents view  
Go headlong down to hell,  
Gone with the rest of Satan’s crew,  
And bid the child farewell.

“ The husband sees his piteous wife,  
With whom he once did dwell,  
Depart with groans and bitter cries,  
My husband, fare you well.

“ But O, perhaps, the wife may see  
The man she once did love,  
Sink down to endless misery,  
While she is crowned above! ”

Having done with this part of his argument, which was certainly of the *reductio ad absurdum* sort par excellence, the Universalist’s champion turned his attention to Dives whom — he explained — was never really in hell at all; and that the parable had no reference to eternal punishment whatever.

Our champion in this debate was James Cowell, and though not especially successful in his encounter with the Universalist, was really a brilliant preacher in the range of the disputatious and dogmatic. Since in a way he typifies one kind of minister common to most bodies in those days, he merits a fuller description. He was our minister at Fairhope for a period of three years. He re-



sided on a farm in another State and preached half time for us; that is, two Sundays each month. He usually arrived on Saturday afternoon and returned to his farm on Monday morning. As a polemic and doctrinal preacher, he was exceptionally able. He was a fine specimen of manhood, a veritable giant with Atlantean shoulders. He possessed a strong voice of great volume and an unusual talent as a mimic. He was fond of a good dinner and a good horse, and was a most entertaining conversationalist. He could tell a story captivantly. He had many friends in our county even among those who differed from him doctrinally. In our community to-day there are three men born during his ministry at Fairhope who were named for him, and this in itself is an eloquent proof of his popularity.

This minister had a perfect passion for the controversial. He had a sermon in which he set out to prove conclusively that the thief on the cross was baptised and it took him all of two hours to preach it. One of his proof texts was Matthew 3: 5-6, "Then went out unto him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region around about the Jordan; and they were baptised of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." His argument was that if "all" of Jerusalem and Judea were baptised of John this thief most certainly was not saved without baptism. Our most spiritual people did not care much for that sermon. Good Jacob Boardman expostulated with this preacher more than

once, saying that this sermon in his opinion did more harm than good. Still, there were certain minds among us who approved of the sermon and even praised it highly. Giles Shockley, who prided himself on his soundness in the faith and who was our self-appointed detective of heresy, held that this sermon was truly Biblical. More than once Giles rode horseback as many as fifteen miles to hear Cowell repeat this particular sermon; and I recall that once Giles remarked to a group of Fairhope's people, "Brethren, James Cowell as a preacher of the Gospel has no equal in the world! Henry Ward Beecher might learn a lot from him, especially on baptism."

Baptism was a perennially popular topic of sermons in those days, and the controversy raged thick and fierce over the ordinance. Our people are immersionists and it was expected in those days that baptism should have a prominent place in the sermon. James Cowell's biggest sermons were on baptism, and an announcement that he would speak on that subject would fill Fairhope meeting-house any time. In this connection a sensational incident occurred. Cowell was preaching on baptism one hot July night and there stood on the pulpit desk a glass of water. The house was well filled and on the front seat — almost under the pulpit — sat a member of another church, a prominent man, a class leader, and a well-to-do farmer. In the midst of a fervid plea for immersion the preacher did a sensational and most daring thing, and he did it

mostly out of an overflowing sense of humour or the downright mischievousness that he possessed so largely. Dramatically he thrust his fingers into the glass of water and flinging out his arm in a dripping gesture, actually sprinkled the brother on the front seat, exclaiming as he did so, "And you call *this* baptism!"

The class leader was, as Giles Shockley phrased it, "considerably riled;" and no wonder! To-day a thing like that would be impossible, and it seems incredible almost that it could have ever happened without bringing down the indignation of the community upon the doer. In that day it was tolerated, laughed over, and even defended by some. Giles Shockley approved of it, and after service that night he informed James Cowell that that was what he called "illustratin' the Gospel."

Cowell sometimes used his skill as a mimic in the pulpit with entertaining, but not always edifying results. In the early days of Fairhope the doctrine of total hereditary depravity was stoutly defended on the one hand and bitterly assailed on the other. Cowell used to burlesque infant damnation in realistic fashion. He would crook his powerful arms and make as though he were holding a baby, and croon and sing to it most motherly. Then suddenly he would press the imaginary baby close to his breast and exclaim, "And you, you dear, sweet, innocent babe, you are damned, you are damned forever, so men say. But O heart of my heart, Jesus says you are not. Jesus says 'of

such is the kingdom of Heaven.' Jesus says we grown-up folks are damned unless we repent and become as you are. You are just from God and we old folks are a long time from Him. We are poor and sinful. You — blessed baby, you are sweet and pure and sinless. Would to God we were all as ready for heaven as you are."

Sometimes this kind of monologue would continue for all of ten minutes during which the audience was divided between indignation on the part of some, approving laughter on the other, and intense interest on the part of all.

There were giants in those days, and for the most part our ministers were grand and noble men; of their goodness and sincerity these annals bear witness! And they were true as steel to the cause dearer to them than life. Some of them made tremendous sacrifices because of their convictions, and all of them preached the Gospel as they read it set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Such an incident as James Cowell sprinkling water on the class leader was exceptional. Most of our ministers would not have countenanced such a thing; and yet from our view-point to-day it is difficult to understand how any minister of the Gospel could do such things and believe himself to be defending the truth in so doing.

In the development of the church the period of controversy was necessary. It certainly gave a tremendous interest to religion in those days; so much so that a sermon then which was not pug-

naciously doctrinal seemed tame. Yet looking back upon that period now, I do not believe that the controversial spirit made for Christlikeness in the membership of the various churches. Our Fairhope people who were spiritual, were so despite this sort of thing and by no means because of it. Our noblest and most reverent-minded people tolerated it only because they believed it necessary. Some of the preachers disliked it and frankly said so in private conversation; but in their sermons to a greater or lesser degree they, too, disputed, argued, and controverted. Carter Goodpasture — one of the regular attendants at Fairhope as well as at all the other churches in our community, but not a member of any — used to say that church people by the way they talked and argued, paraphrased First John 3: 14 to read, "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we *fight* the brethren."

But Carter in so saying did us scant justice. Our preachers did debate and argue, it is true; and we church members argued and disputed among ourselves about religious doctrines and the ordinances; and yet, strange as it may seem, we loved one another. Down below the surface where doctrinal differences were much in evidence, we were brotherly and needed but an opportunity to prove it. When sickness or adversity or death came, we forgot or ignored our doctrinal differences; and ministered one to another in tenderest and kindest fashion. We wept with those who wept; and

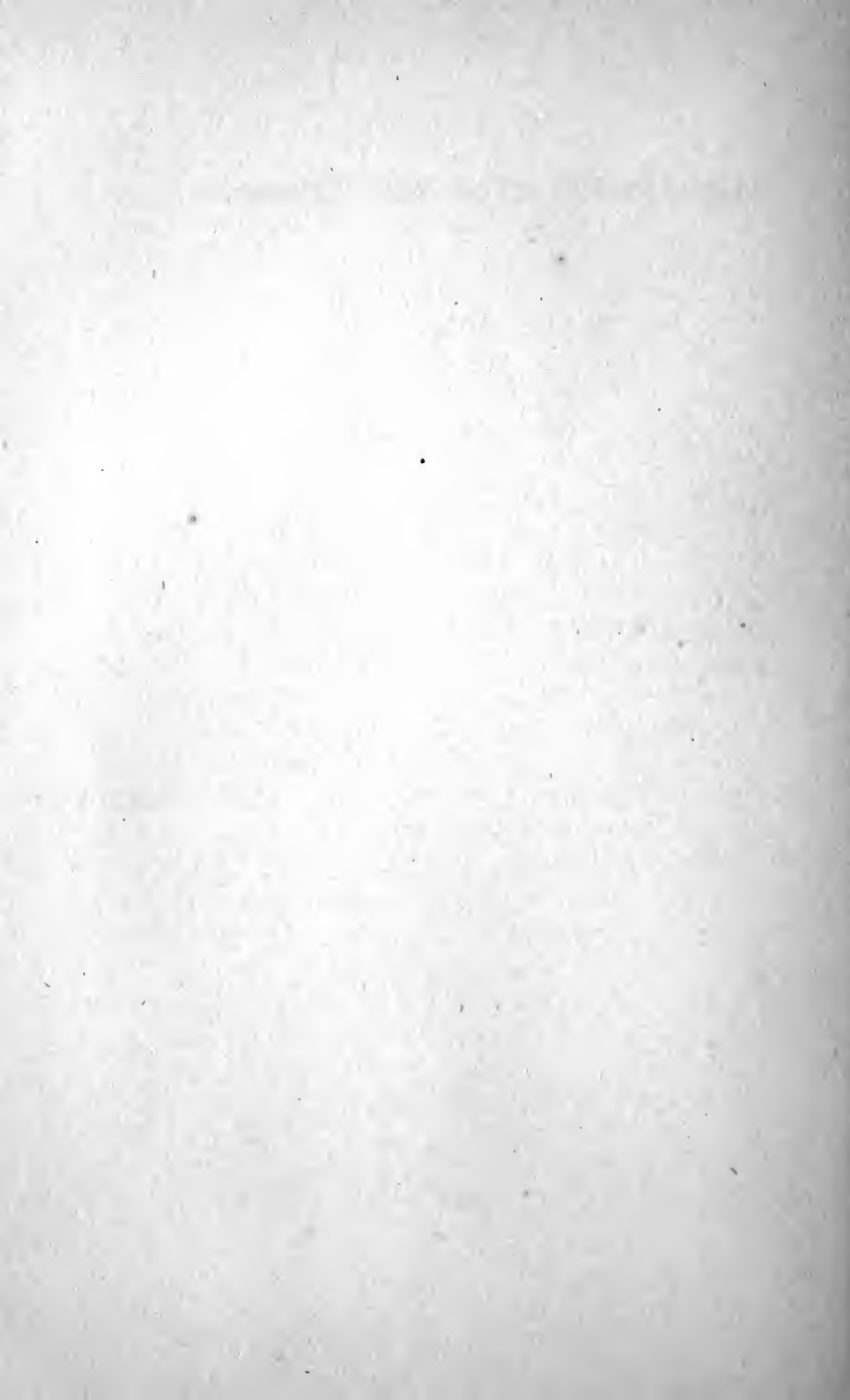
in those experiences we turned to God and His Christ, and our religion became at such times a great hope and strong comfort, merging us the while into blessed unity of spirit. Even Giles Shockley who was a warrior bold in the realm of the doctrinal, forgot to argue or contend and remembered only to serve when sickness or accident laid low some neighbour.

It was at the County Fair that Giles and Sam Bowman almost came to blows in an argument over the order of faith and repentance in conversion. Giles held that faith came first, and Sam stubbornly insisted that repentance came first. Friends separated them before any blows were struck, but they didn't speak to each other for all of a year. Nevertheless, when Sam was fatally hurt by the falling of a tree upon him, it was Giles who found him, carried him several miles to his home, and remained by his bedside until death mercifully relieved his sufferings.

For one I am glad the period of acrimonious controversy and debate in matters religious is over. I have not heard in Fairhope Church but one or two controversial sermons after the old style and spirit in a dozen years; but I have heard many a prayer on taming the tongue, on temptation, on the mind of Christ, and other spiritual themes, that made me want the more to press on unto perfection. And if our preachers twenty-five and fifty years ago were with us now their great ability, their loyalty, and their devotion to

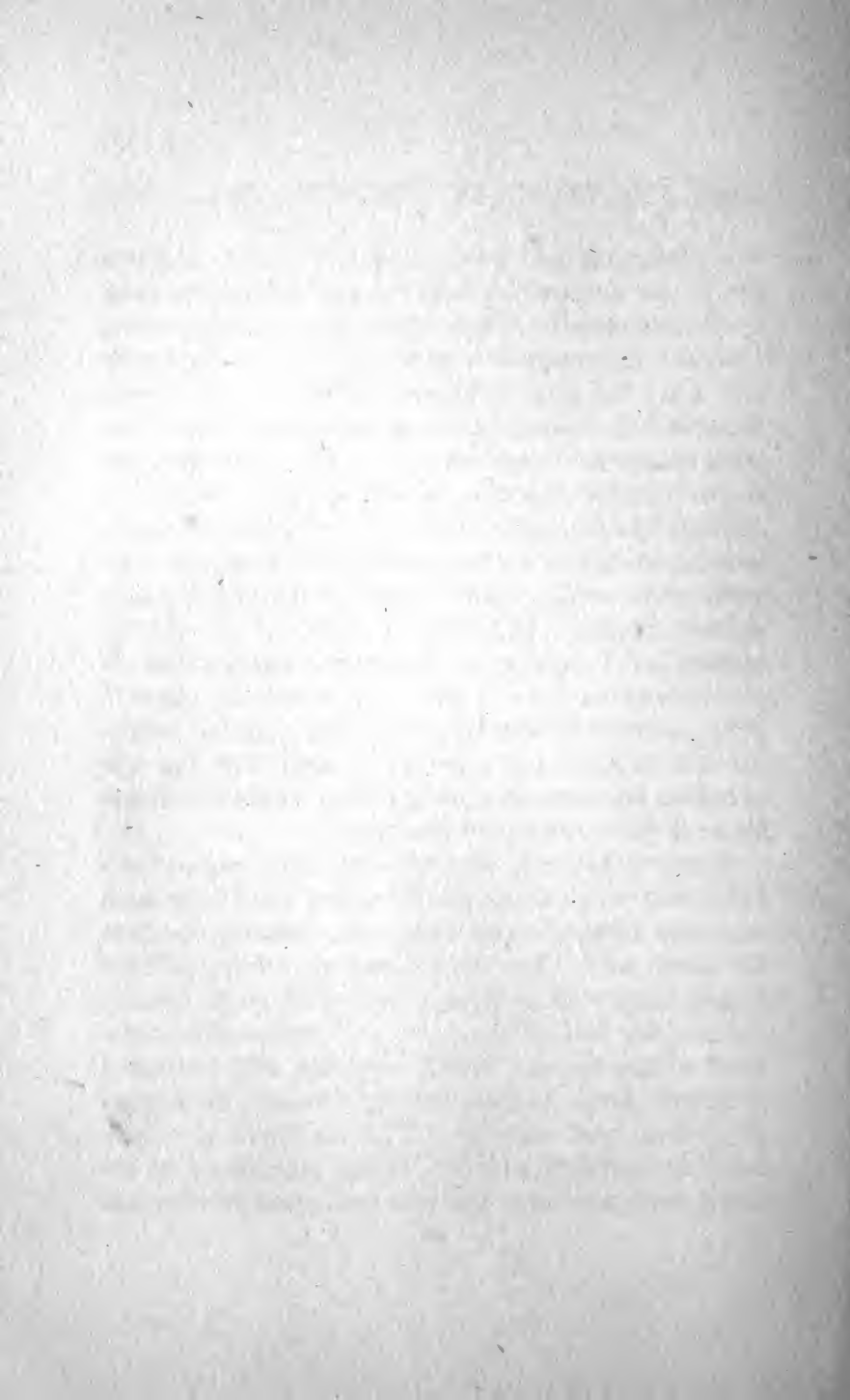
the cause, would in all probability find its expression in such preaching as this. While on the other hand, if our ministers of these modern times had flourished in the days of their predecessors of Fairhope and other churches of that period, beyond any doubt they, too, would have been argumentative and dogmatic. The age was such; and to a greater or lesser extent as the chameleon partakes of the colour of its surroundings, so men reflect the spirit of their age.

Somewhere I have read of the need of a moral equivalent of war, something that will bring out the heroic and a sturdy sense of loyalty in men without the carnage and rapine attendant on armed conflict; but instead will result in those beneficent, social revolutions which tend to make earth a more habitable place for mankind. I like much that idea. And just so, I could wish that there might be a spiritual equivalent for the absorbing interest, fervid zeal, and serious concern, for religion that rainbowed the days of debate and controversy with a sort of solemn splendour.





## THE PROTRACTED MEETINGS



## THE PROTRACTED MEETINGS

AN important and interesting feature of religious life in our community was the protracted meeting. In the city churches these services are usually called revivals or evangelistic meetings, and occasionally now I see the term "decision services." But with us, protracted meetings is the homely and familiar term in common use among our people to describe those fruitful endeavours and special seasons for making of converts to the faith. These meetings, indeed, were the occasions when most of our converts were made. Conversions at the regular services were rare and not often expected. It was the custom of Fairhope and other congregations in our county to have a protracted meeting once a year, conducted sometimes by the regular minister but oftener by a preacher imported for the occasion from some church of like faith in a near-by or distant portion of the State.

Richard Marvin, who was our able and successful minister for all of twelve years, held four such meetings himself; and they were among the best we ever had. Our protracted meetings seldom lasted longer than two weeks, and were usually held in the fall of the year and preferably in the light of the moon. These meetings seldom failed to attract large audiences and stimulate evangelistic interest and fervour. The members of neighbouring churches of other faiths attended and entered with zest into the services. And it was our

custom to plan these meetings so they would not conflict in time; thus giving opportunity for an attendance on the part of the peoples in the community of the various denominations.

I have seen Fairhope meeting-house packed to the doors time and again during protracted meetings. I have seen the children seated about the pulpit steps in order to give their places to adults. And the memories I have of notable sermons and conversions is considerable and very distinct. On the Lord's day of the protracted meetings there was usually a basket-dinner, provided the weather was suitable; and such dinners they were! The good housewives of our community — famous cooks for the most part — prepared for these occasions sumptuously. Cakes were baked by the dozens; angel's food cakes, devil's food, such old-fashioned confections as pound cake, sponge cake, jelly roll, and many other toothsome pastries. Chickens were slaughtered ruthlessly, fastidiously boiled and fried, and served most appetizingly. There were pickles and jams and preserves; and occasionally even freezers of ice cream brought. No wonder the basket-dinners were usually attended by every able-bodied man and woman and child in the community who could get away from home. On basket-meeting Lord's day three services were held, the special service being the afternoon preaching. The two long, stout tables on which so many of these dinners were served may still be seen in the rear of Fairhope meeting-house,

little used now, but monuments as it were to that period of big basket-meetings and the crowds of neighbours and friends representative of all the religious bodies in the community who practised Christian unity in this respect with beautiful and bountiful hospitality.

Usually the preachers entered into the basket-meetings with zest, especially city ministers. The truth is, I recall but one preacher of the many who held meetings for us to whom these basket dinners were nightmares. He was a dyspeptic; a sallow, thin-chested, hollow-cheeked, pasty-complexioned, sort of a personage with the appetite of a dove. This man fell into high disfavour with our good women because he refused to eat hot bread; declined pie of every kind; and fairly anathematised mince pie in particular. He also spurned pickles, eyed marmalades suspiciously, and actually ate but one piece of fried chicken at a meal. He finally informed some of Fairhope's women that he was on a diet. This man's meetings were a flat failure, although he was a sermoniser of more than ordinary ability. His failure was due, I think, to his ailing stomach and consequent poor appetite. At any rate, Cousin Sallie Jo Brooking — famous alike for her excellent cooking and her very blunt speech — declared with emphasis, "The Lord ought not to allow a man to preach who can't eat; and the next time our elders call a man to hold us a meeting they ought to be sure that he has eatin' ability as well as preachin' ability."

Very different from this minister was a big-bodied, full-blooded preacher of the Gospel who held a successful meeting for us one fall; and who was not only a hearty but a prodigious eater. His ability to make away with the tempting edibles prepared by our splendid cooks both amazed and delighted his hostesses. A more enthusiastic champion of fried chicken never breathed, and pies of every kind straightway set his mouth to watering. Major Menifee asked this man once if he did not sometimes find it necessary to eat sparingly just before preaching a sermon. The minister answered the Major quick as a flash, "Not at all! I just eat all I *want* and preach all I *can*."

But this feature of our protracted meetings, important and attractive as it was to many, was only incidental to the spiritual feasts served us at such seasons. The good of these special services was much in evidence in those early days. It took usually about a week's preaching to the church and a warming over of those who were already members, to bring about the proper atmosphere for conversions. Seldom did any "go forward" during the first week of the meeting. Young Harmon Vaughn held in the second year of his ministry at Fairhope, the longest protracted meeting in the history of our congregation — a solid month — and Vaughn preached all of two weeks without a single convert. The night of his second Lord's day in this meeting he closed his sermon with a most melting sort of invitation to obey the Gospel;

and when nobody stirred, he slammed his hymn book down on the communion table with a resounding whack, and exclaimed, "This community is Gospel-hardened! You people are as hard as flint! You are sermon-scarred veterans! You make me mad! I am going to quit and go where people have hearts as well as souls; where they will respond to the invitation of Jesus Christ."

After the sermon Jacob Boardman came up and gently expostulated with Vaughn, who was actually angry and ready to give up in utter discouragement.

"Look here, Brother Vaughn," the old man counselled mildly and affectionately, "don't you be weary in well doing. God's Word won't return to Him void. It never has, it never will! Don't shake the dust of this sinful community off your feet, my brother. Shake the blue devils out of your system. You go on with your preaching. The people will come to Jesus by-and-by."

And come they did. Forty-four of them; and the meeting — taken as a whole — in some respects was one of the most noteworthy ever held in Fairhope meeting-house.

I recall some really remarkable conversions during our protracted meetings. Such a one was that of old Abe Brocunior. Old Abe was one of our disreputable citizens; profane, ribald, a drunkard, a blatant infidel, and a sinner of most unsavoury reputation. He was past seventy years old

and the community judged him a hopeless case so far as reformation was concerned. He seldom attended church and whenever he did it was to sit in the backmost seat to ridicule the preacher, blaspheme religion, and take a vicious delight in bringing in view the family skeleton of the worshippers as he sat there whispering to young fellows who sat near him. Somehow, old Abe took a fancy to young Vaughn who one day made the old man a friendly visit, remained an hour, and never said a word to Abe in criticism of his evil habits or about coming into the church. The latter part of the second week of the meeting old Abe began to attend the services. Sitting in the rearmost seat at first, he began gradually to sit further toward the front; and for the first time in the memory of our community he made no criticisms or denunciations of church members or preacher. One night in the middle of the last week of the meetings, Vaughn preached from the text, "And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." It was a very tender sermon showing the love of God, and the invitation was pressed with impassioned power. The invitation hymn was the old familiar, "Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me." The first stanza of that hymn had scarcely begun when old Abe, utterly broken in spirit and crying like a little child, came forward and sinking down in the front pew, buried his tear-stained face in his hands. His coming melted us all; Jacob Boardman wept, most of the women



were sobbing, Vaughn was visibly affected, and even Giles Shockley was moved.

Fairhope people are much given to handshaking, and during protracted meetings it has long been the custom for our ministers to invite all who wish to bid the new converts Godspeed, to come to the front and give them a hearty clasp of the hand. It is a homely, but a brotherly custom and a revealing one, as well. A close observer, looking on, would perceive that some shake hands stiffly and in a purely perfunctory fashion, others shake not only hands but arms also, and with the vigour and motion of pumping water; but all with a genial and sincere joy shining in their faces. In a similar manner the hand of fellowship was extended to the new members after their baptism, and to those who came by letter from sister churches. Usually the congregation stood during the singing of some such hymn as,

“Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love,”

while the members left their pews, and in single file passed down between the pulpit and the front seat to extend the hand of welcome. We invariably shook the minister's hand, too, on such occasions; and there was power and praise in such services.

The night of old Abe Brocunior's conversion, when Vaughn invited the congregation to greet the new convert, nearly everybody responded; old

and young, saint and sinner, went forward to wring his hand and wish him well. All the ice went out in the melting warmth of that closing service, and the way was opened for two score more conversions. Best of all, the old man remained true to his profession the remaining years of his poor broken life.

Another meeting, one held by Richard Marvin, witnessed the conversion of Abner Sublett under peculiar circumstances. Sublett was a substantial farmer whose family were all in the church and most interested in religion. He was a believer, but he had so long postponed a public confession of faith that it seemed he simply could not muster up courage sufficient to take the step. Meeting after meeting passed and he remained not unmoved but still outside the Kingdom. Each time we hoped and prayed that Abner would "go forward." Interested he always was; liberal in his contributions; never missing a service; but still unresponsive to the invitation. One night during protracted meetings we thought Abner was surely "going forward." The sermon profoundly stirred him; and during the hymn of invitation he actually started up the aisle, but got only to the next pew where he stopped, gripped the back of the pew in front of him with both hands, and could get no further.

Richard Marvin was at Sublett's for dinner during these meetings, a day or two after the service in which Abner started up the aisle. After dinner

he and Abner walked out over the farm to look at the stock, and particularly some fat cattle. It was a glorious day in early October, one of those golden days when the tinge of autumn is on field and tree, and a slight haze hovers like a halo over the land. As the two men strolled across the fields, the minister could not resist the temptation to talk to Abner about his soul and salvation.

"Abner," for Richard Marvin had been among our people so long that he called many of us by our first name. "Abner," he said, "God has been good to you. What a grand farm you have. What a comfortable home. What a fine family! Yet, Abner, you have not honoured God as He has honoured you."

The old man was plainly agitated. He stopped short and looked across the level fields toward the house just visible in the clump of maple trees.

"You're right, Brother Marvin. Yet I want to honour God. I want to confess His Son as my Saviour. But somehow I can't go forward; my legs give out, I feel as though I was going to fall. I just can't go, I —"

"Abner," interrupted Richard Marvin, "do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Saviour?"

"That I do, with all my heart, Richard."

"Then let us pray right here and now," suggested Marvin. The two men knelt in that blue-grass pasture with the fat cattle grazing near, and the deep blue sky overhead. Marvin thanked God for the confession of Abner Sublett, and prayed

the blessing of the Father to be upon him and all his household; prayed that God would give him strength now to confess further his faith in the ordinance of baptism, and to unite with the church. Abner Sublett said "Amen" to that prayer. That night Richard Marvin told the congregation in Fairhope meeting-house of the confession taken out in God's great out-of-doors, and announced that Brother Sublett would be baptised the next day in Woolper Creek. And again Fairhope's congregation wept in pure joy because another soul had been borne into the Kingdom. Never did we sing the long metred doxology more understandingly than at that service. Far across the fields the words were carried by the pleasant evening breezes:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him all ye heavenly hosts,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Our baptismal services are usually impressive. Our present meeting-house has a baptistry built in it, but for the most part our converts are still baptised in the streams or the nearby Ohio River. To this day our baptismal services stir me deeply. Looking back over the stretch of years, I recall several baptismal services that are indelibly impressed on my memory. Some of these baptisms took place in the Ohio River, one such was during the last protracted meeting held for us by Richard

Marvin. One Lord's day he baptised some fifteen persons in the river. The place of the baptism was at a bend in the river where the pebbled beach sloped gently out from the shore-line to the deeper water, an ideal place for such a service. To the rear of us were the precipitous bluffs on the Kentucky side, and across the stream were the fertile bottoms and the willow-lined shores of Indiana. A large crowd was present and there was no disorder or confusion. The candidates were led out into the water up to their waists, and then after the simple formula pronounced by the minister they were gently lowered beneath the water. As they emerged dripping from the stream, raised up by the strong arm of the minister, the throng on the shore sang one verse of,

“ Happy day, happy day,  
 When Jesus washed my sins away;  
 He taught me how to watch and pray,  
 And live rejoicing every day.”

The service that day was scarcely half over when an excursion boat from Cincinnati swung around the bend. This boat carried a steam calliope on which the musician had been playing popular airs. Seeing the crowd, however, at the water's edge, and noting the baptismal service — not an uncommon sight even to this day along the river — the calliope began playing, “ Nearer, my God, to Thee.” The excursionists ceased their merry-making and very quietly and reverently watched

the beautiful and impressive service until the boat had passed that point.

I recall another baptismal service conducted by James Cowell at the same place in the Ohio River. One of those baptised at that time was a frail girl, named Searcy, the daughter of a tenant living on the Walmsley farm. Her father was a raw-boned, wildish sort of man, who objected vigorously to his daughter joining the church, and had threatened to do bodily injury to any minister who tried to "dip" Lina — that was his daughter's name. However, the young girl courageously came along with the rest and was in her turn led out into the waters of the Ohio. Her father — his face dark with anger — looked on from farther up the bank. The girl, wan and frail, and unnaturally pale probably from fright, looked like a being from another world as she clasped her hands over her thin breast and the minister pronounced the words, "I baptise thee, Lina, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Then he gently lowered her under the water, lifted her up again, and assisted her to the shore. By the time she and James Cowell reached the shore, her father was at the water's edge, having made his way quickly through the crowd which fell back instantly to let him pass, though some of the men were watching him closely. But instead of offering any violence to the minister, he put his arms around Lina and kissed her on both cheeks. Turning to the minister he said, "Brother Cowell, baptise me."

“Do you believe in Christ as your Lord and Saviour?”

“I do,” said Searcy. And divesting himself of his shoes, hat and coat, he suffered himself to be led out into the deeper water; and like his daughter was buried with his Lord in the ordinance of baptism. How the men and women sang “Happy day,” as that man came up out of the water! How they shook Bob Searcy’s hands and wished him well! The memory of that melting service is as distinct to me to-day as though it had occurred but yesterday.

Forty years ago it was not unusual for us to baptise in midwinter when ice six or eight inches thick had to be cut for the purpose. My mother was baptised under such conditions, though I was too young to remember it. But I have witnessed some half-dozen baptisms myself in the coldest winter weather. At such times as soon as the candidates came out of the icy waters, they were warmly wrapped in heavy blankets and taken to the nearest farm-house for change of clothing. I do not recall ever hearing of any one taking cold from such exposures. I have seen Richard Marvin in the late fall — when the water was very cold — stand in a deep hole in Woolper Creek for all of half an hour baptising people, without the protection of rubber suits such as are now used by ministers while immersing; and still I never knew of his suffering any bad effects from such a service in the chilly stream.

It is probably true that some of our people attach too much importance to the ordinance of baptism. Giles Shockley and a few others held insistently that our sins were not forgiven till the act of baptism was consummated. I heard Giles once in a very heated argument with a minister of another communion in which he declared that if a man was on the way to be baptised and a limb of a tree struck him and killed him, he would die without any promise of forgiveness because he died unbaptised. But this was extreme, and our best and most spiritual minds never held to such a legalistic view.

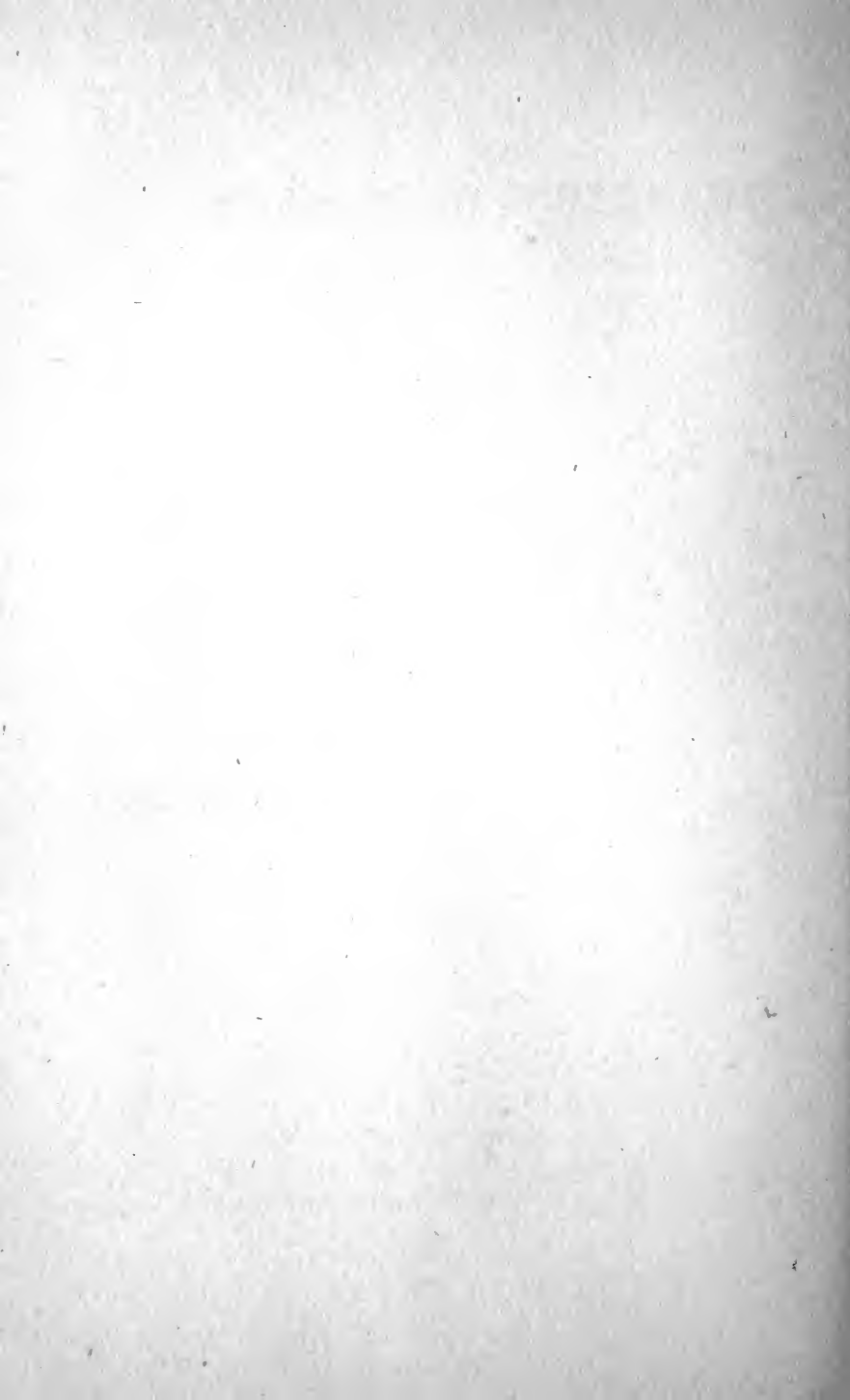
Not long ago I was in a large city over Lord's day and worshipped at one of its influential churches. The building is beautiful and well appointed, and there is a trained chorus-choir which appeared the night I heard them in surplices after the Episcopal fashion. The service, all in all, was helpful; the sermon was strong and thoroughly evangelistic; but the singing of the choir impressed me most. And not especially because their singing was so excellent, though it was such; nor because they wore surplices. Rather in spite of that fact. But I remembered that service most and longest for the reason that the second selection sung by the chorus-choir was,

“ O happy day that fixed my choice  
On Thee, my Saviour and my God.  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.

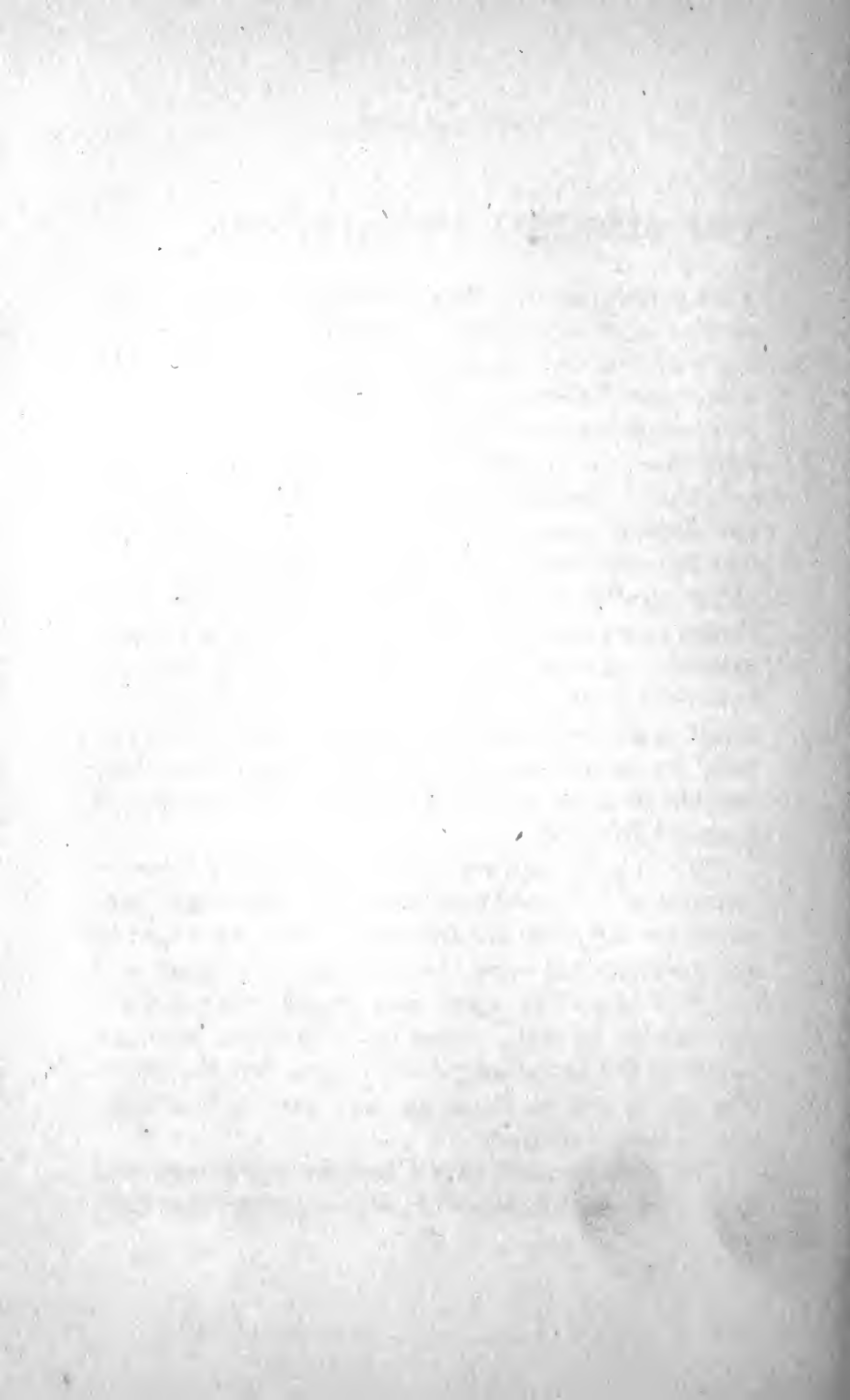


“ Happy day, happy day,  
 When Jesus washed my sins away.  
 He taught me how to watch and pray,  
 And live rejoicing every day.”

As the words and melody filled the spacious edifice, I lost sense of time and place and there unfolded before my misty vision the great bend of a lordly river, the level pebbly shore, and a company of men and women gathered there. The figure of a broad shouldered man standing up to his waist in the stream, lowering gently beneath the water a calm and contrite young woman, and then raising her dripping body up again, while on the bank two score voices joined soulfully in singing, “ Happy day.”



# THE SINGING AT FAIRHOPE



## THE SINGING AT FAIRHOPE

THE singing in Fairhope meeting-house has experienced almost as many vicissitudes as the preaching services; but on the whole our singing has always been, I think, an edifying part of the worship. For many years a singing school was an important adjunct to the church and all members were urged to enrol. Sometimes the congregation employed the singing master, other times the expense was met by individual subscription. Practically all our older members were taught to sing in this way. Forty years ago, and longer, Fairhope's congregation — almost to a member — could sing any hymn the leader might "raise." Jacob Boardman could lead congregational singing fairly successfully up to a few years of his death. Our older preachers were splendid singers and notably so Richard Marvin.

The organ question which was long a bone of contention in northern Kentucky churches, was never serious with us. In the seventies we began to use instrumental music in the Sunday School, and in a few years the organ was heard in the preaching service as well. Some congregations were divided by the installing of the organ, but the objection to its use in Fairhope was not considerable, nor of long duration.

The first hymnal that Fairhope purchased and used was without notes. It was a pudgy, fat, little

book, possibly three by four inches, and full two and one-half inches thick. It contained one thousand three hundred and twenty-four hymns, a really great collection for that day. Some of the selections in this hymnal are so far as I know, in no other; and I recall one such in particular. It is a tribute to the Bible, and the tune was "The Old Oaken Bucket." I include it here in full, since it revives the memory of the song service in rural churches such as this present generation cannot know; and likewise, the stanzas are fraught with the spirit of reverence that our people felt and loved to express for the Holy Scriptures.

" How painfully pleasing the fond recollection  
Of youthful connections and innocent joy,  
When bless'd with parental advice and affection,  
Surrounded with mercies — with peace from on high!  
I still view the chairs of my father and mother,  
The seats of their offspring as ranged on each hand;  
And that richest of books, which excell'd ev'ry other,  
The family Bible that lay on the stand.  
The old-fashioned Bible, the dear, blessed Bible,  
The family Bible that lay on the stand.

" That Bible, the volume of God's inspiration,  
At morn and at ev'ning could yield us delight;  
And the pray'r of our sire was a sweet invocation  
For mercy by day and for safety thro' night;  
Our hymn of thanksgiving with harmony swelling,  
All warm from the heart of the family band,  
Has rais'd us from earth to that rapturous dwelling  
Described in the Bible that lay on the stand;

The old-fashioned Bible, the dear, blessed Bible,  
The family Bible that lay on the stand.

“Ye scenes of tranquillity long have we parted,  
My hopes almost gone and my parents no more,  
In sorrow and sadness I live broken-hearted,  
And wander unknown on a far distant shore;  
Yet how can I doubt a dear Saviour’s protection  
Forgetful of gifts from His bountiful hand!  
O let me with patience receive His correction,  
And think of the Bible that lay on the stand;  
The old-fashioned Bible, the dear, blessed Bible,  
The family Bible that lay on the stand.”

Among the prime favourite hymns at Fairhope were the time-tested “Rock of Ages,” “Jesus, Lover of My Soul,” “Am I a Soldier of the Cross,” “How Firm a Foundation,” “Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken,” and “One Sweetly Solemn Thought.” “Beautiful Valley of Eden” and “He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought” were also much beloved, and often sung at the morning service. The latter hymn was Jacob Boardman’s favourite; he sang it with a spiritual fervour that was contagious and especially so when the second stanza was reached.

“Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom,  
Sometimes where Eden’s bowers bloom,  
By waters still, o’er troubled sea,  
Still ’tis God’s hand that leadeth me.”

Another hymn that was popular in my boyhood days I have not heard for a score of years. It is a

pilgrim hymn and our modern church life does not take kindly to the "I am a Pilgrim, I am a Stranger," idea. On the whole, even church people are pretty well established in this present world; and tolerably well satisfied with the life that now is. The first stanza and chorus of the hymn I have in mind has to do almost altogether with the Yonder, and only a little with the Here:

"Here we are but straying pilgrims,  
Here our path is often dim,  
But to cheer us on our journey  
Still we sing this wayside hymn.

CHORUS: "Yonder over the rolling water,  
Where the shining mansions rise,  
Soon will be our home forever,  
And the smile of the Blessed Giver  
Gladdens all our longing eyes."

There were four stanzas to this hymn. We sang them all without fail, and after each stanza the chorus. It was the chorus that the people liked especially for it was sung to a tune which gave a sort of vocal description of a rolling river, and at the time of a protracted meeting — when the interest was marked — it seemed to me that the whole congregation swayed to and fro in unconscious imitation of the surge of great waves on storm-tossed waters.

In the early eighties, Fairhope passed from the era of congregational singing led by one of our



musical brethren to a mixed choir of some six or ten voices. For many years this choir rendered splendid service. There were so many good voices in it and they blended so admirably, that it was a positive delight to listen to their singing of the great old hymns. The congregation did not permit them to do all the singing, but joined heartily and melodiously in the worship of sacred song.

The number of good singing voices in Fairhope has been unusually large; a fact that was often commented upon by visitors from the city or nearby churches. Some of our women had cultivated voices, like Miss Clara Meniffee whose rich contralto fell sweet and true upon the ear. Sadie Van Pelt possessed a high, clear soprano, and for a decade her sweet tones came like a benediction upon the sorrowing hearts who gathered in Fairhope meeting-house to pay the last tribute to their blessed dead. Latterly, Lucy Patton with a voice similar in sweetness and purity, has succeeded her in that gracious ministry to the bereft. Major Meniffee's good bass contributed each Lord's day to the worship; and Carter Goodpasture's high tenor was truer than some of his stories of famous horse races and the winning of fabulous purses. The Van Gorder family perhaps more than any other, enriched our services in a musical way. Every member of the family could sing and the girls were accomplished musicians. All in all, it occurs to me that our church has been signally blessed through the years in a membership able to

raise their voices to God in the worship of spiritual songs.

Yet, there have been times when our singing was far from satisfactory; and like all churches, Fairhope has had its experiences with persons who believed themselves called of the Lord to exercise the gift of song, but alas! were sadly deluded. Such a one was Tobe McQuoid, who for many years mildly terrorised every volunteer choir in our community by attaching himself to it on every possible occasion. Tobe was a member of a religious body that had few communicants in our neighbourhood, but he invariably contributed his might to the singing wherever he worshipped. If there was a choir he made a bee-line for it, no matter how late his arrival at the church. If there were no choir he took as conspicuous a seat as he could possibly find in the front of the meeting-house. Tobe was a singularly ugly man. One of his eyes was badly cast, and the pupil prone to roll upward until only half of it was in sight, while the other half concealed itself behind the fluttering lid. Then, too, his false teeth were poorly fitted and given to weird displacements during Tobe's vocal gymnastics. It was scarcely an edifying sight to watch McQuoid — ardent singer that he was — as he quite forgot himself in the singing of some familiar hymn. His bad eye — as if bidding farewell to earthly scenes — would take its upward turn; while at the same time his teeth shifted about uneasily, threatening to leap from his capacious

mouth. Still, one can get used to most anything and the time came when we accustomed ourselves at Fairhope — as did other congregations in the community — to Tobe McQuoid in the choir or on the front seat, singing with might and main. Tobe was not a bad sort of man and hundreds went to his funeral. The minister who conducted the service had known McQuoid for many years; and I think in his selection for the Scripture lesson that day he showed rare powers of discernment. He read from the Revised Version the entire third chapter of Philippians which contains the noble passage,

“For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.”

Another thorn in our flesh was Virgil Hornsey, a member of Fairhope who reckoned himself to be a singer with a versatile voice, which he certainly was not. Virgil was an individualist pure and simple when it came to singing hymns. He scorned to do any kind of vocal team work and was wont to be either far ahead or a considerable distance behind the choir and congregation. Virgil loved to draw out the verses interminably and accompanied the turns and twisting with a nasal twang that was nerve wracking. If the hymn was “How Firm a Foundation,” Virgil would be in his glory for

there is a tune that admits of infinite dragging. About the time the congregation reached the top of the hill with "What more can he say than to you he has said," Virgil would be at the foot with "His excellent word;" and as the others started down the slope with "You who unto Jesus have fled," Virgil would reach the top of the hill and his loud nasal notes would twang out "have laid." Fortunately, Virgil was easily winded and perforce had to drop out after a vain and vociferous effort to sing every selection to the end. Virgil — and others like him — were not strangers to us; and yet Fairhope had, I believe, fewer annoyances of this kind to mar the singing than the average church. We had a gracious number of sweet singers in Israel and the memory of their voices raised in praise to God is altogether refreshing.

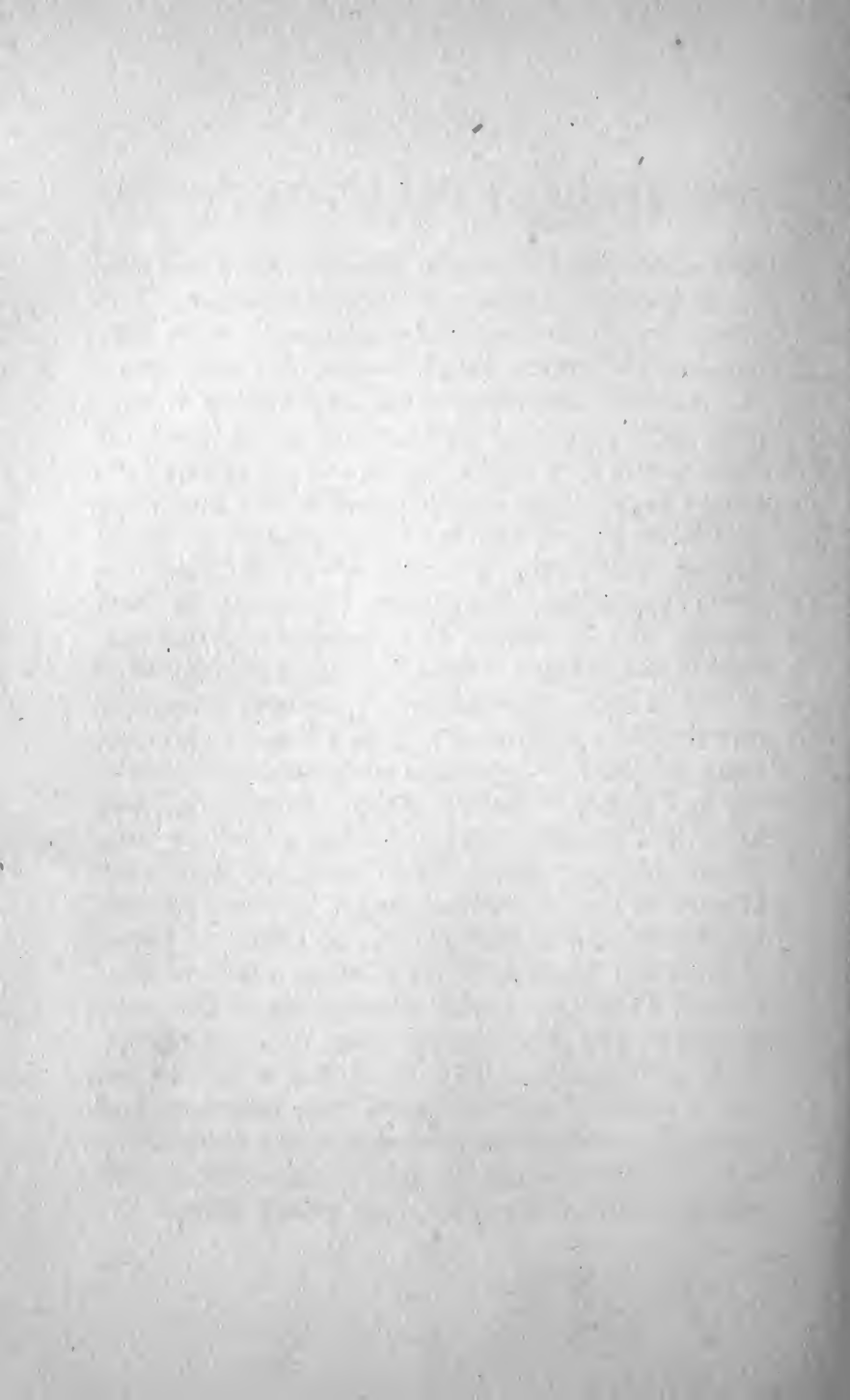
On the whole, I believe that the singing in our American churches is not so general, nor so good as it once was. The city churches depend largely on quartettes and chorus-choirs, while the singing in the average country church is far from reverent. It will be a notable day for the rural church when it restores the worship of God in congregational singing. I praise the heavenly Father that through so many years it was given me to enjoy such full-voiced, congregational singing as filled Fairhope meeting-house, and swelling in volume and harmony, was wafted to the Father's throne on high. And once again, before I set out upon the Great Adventure, I should like to hear as in

the old days, our rural church raise in tuneful melody the praiseful hymn:

“O, Thou Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace:  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above;  
Praise the Mount, I'm fixed upon it,  
Mount of Thy redeeming love.”



## OUR STUDENT PREACHERS





## OUR STUDENT PREACHERS

FOR many years Fairhope has enjoyed in one way or another the ministry of student preachers. The proximity of our theological seminary — less than one hundred miles distant — has of course made this kind of ministry of easy access when a regularly settled minister was not obtainable. Some of these young men ministered to us only as supplies; others began their ministries while still in college and later settled with us for a greater or lesser period. Still again, we were served for brief periods by ministers who for the entire time of their service were residents at Lexington and matriculates in the college. Some of the most distinguished ministers in our communion — men now occupying metropolitan pulpits as well as editorial and professorial chairs — got their early ministerial training at Fairhope. Indeed, Major Meniffee used to boast that Fairhope was a training school for most of our big preachers. There certainly was truth in part of the Major's comment at least; for following the period that gave us such men as James Cowell and Richard Marvin, there came another period when the young minister used the rural church simply as a stepping stone to a city charge. Such a thing as settling down for a five or ten year's ministry with a church even as strong and desirable as Fairhope probably never entered the minds of our young preachers since the middle nineties. Nor did it enter our minds either. We

accepted it as a matter of course that the bright, young ministers would leave us as soon as a desirable church should call them. And because of such frequent change in ministers, Fairhope began to suffer a slow but sure decline. Only our strength, both numerically and financially, preserved us from the quicker decline of less fortunate country congregations.

Fairhope is rich in the traditions of student ministers who have won conspicuous success in the larger circles of our communion. The minister of a noted church in the East, a man signally honoured by a great Eastern university, preached his first — and at that time his only — missionary sermon in Fairhope meeting-house, and thereby hangs a tale. This young preacher was sent into our county by the Home Missionary Society to deliver a missionary sermon at three of our churches on the same day. He was to preach for us at Fairhope in the morning, in the afternoon at Point Pleasant six miles eastward, and that night at Florence, some four or five miles in another direction. The young man boldly accepted the appointment, determined to make one missionary sermon serve for all three places. In the morning he spoke for us much to our profit and pleasure. On the front seat sat old Dr. McIntosh, one of Florence's venerable communicants who by his patriarchal beard, his fine head, and expansive brow, always attracted the attention of visitors. Immediately after the morning service the young minister was taken in

charge by a member of Point Pleasant's congregation who entertained him for dinner, and got him to the church just in time to fill his appointment. Going into the pulpit the young man was dismayed to see sitting on a front seat the same benignant looking patriarch who had heard him with such apparent interest that morning. Nonplussed not a little, he went ahead and repeated the sermon of the morning with apparent difficulty. At the close of the service he was again hurried away; this time by a member of the Florence congregation who took him to town, entertained him at supper, and escorted him to the church just in time to go into the pulpit. And lo! complacently seated on the next to the front seat sat the same venerable man who had already listened twice to the same sermon. The young minister's knees smote one against the other when he saw him and realised he was to have him for auditor the third time in half a day. Vainly he tried to think his way through a new line of thought, but gave that up as impractical. So for the third time he started in on the same sermon, attempting, however, to rearrange his subject matter. Accordingly he introduced the sermon with the conclusion, and used the introductory paragraphs later. But in so rearranging the order he disorganised his thought completely and made a most wretched failure. After the benediction the young man tried to do what I have observed nearly every preacher wants to do when he has preached a poor sermon — flee

like a bird to the mountains, or anywhere else where the hiding is good. But escape was impossible. His host pounced upon him and marched him straight up to the benevolent old man, explaining the while "I want you to meet Dr. McIntosh. He is one of our most faithful members. He likes to go to church though he's deaf as a post. *Fact is, he hasn't heard a sermon for ten years!*"

During the period of Richard Marvin's ministry at Fairhope he was once assisted in a protracted meeting by two student preachers from Lexington. One of the young men conducted the singing, the other did the preaching. They were likable young fellows, very much in earnest, and thoroughly in love with their calling. Haggard, the student who did the preaching, lacked any sense of humour and therefore began his ministerial career handicapped to that extent. For of all men, it occurs to me the minister in particular has need of a keen sense of the ridiculous. At the time of this protracted meeting there were two women in Fairhope church who were not on good terms, by name: Mrs. Susan Wingate and Mrs. John Sam Moller. They were good women, too, despite eccentricities which were marked in both cases.

Mrs. Wingate spoke with a decided lisp and very rapidly. Mrs. Moller was a German and spoke English brokenly. On the first Saturday afternoon of this meeting the regular preaching service was preceded by an experience meeting. This

kind of a meeting at Fairhope was always informal and consisted of quotations of Scriptures, brief prayers, and occasional testimonies that were largely of a personal nature. That day Mrs. Moller took advantage of the opportunity afforded and rose to her feet bent on airing her grievance against Mrs. Wingate. Young Haggard was in charge of the service, although Marvin was present and, also, the young brother who led the singing.

Mrs. Moller was excited and her speech was rapid and thick. "Brothers and sisters," she exclaimed, "chust look at Sister Wingate. She iss a prouddt, stuck up and haughty woman. She shouldt already be turndt outdt of der church until she iss humpled to her knees. She vill efer take a frondt seat, away up in der Amen Corner. She shouldt be made to sit in der back part of der meetin'-house. I tell you, she iss proud as Lucifer."

Haggard, solemn as an owl, listened to Mrs. Moller's accusations, but failed to get their drift; and as she sat down much frustrated he said, "Thank the Lord for those words."

Then Susan Wingate got up, her slim body trembling like an aspen leaf and tears streaming down her face. "Brothers and Thisthers, you have all heard the tharge Thister Moller hath brought againsth me. I am ath innocent ath a new born babe. Nothing in my handsth I bring, thimply to thy crossth I cling. I —"

But Susan Wingate could go no further; she sat down and buried her face in her hands, her narrow shoulders heaving with emotion. Haggard surveyed her with a sort of sanctimonious approval, after which he pronounced in measured words the benediction, "Praise the Lord for that testimony, Sister. You have wrought well."

By this time most of the worshippers who had sensed the situation from the first, were on the point of explosion, so Richard Marvin got up and said, "The young brother here will lead us in a hymn."

Whereupon Ellis, who was as overflowing with a sense of humour as his colleague was devoid of it, announced in unsteady tones, "Let us all sing 'Blest be the Tie that Binds.'" And they did.

Fairhope was generous to her student preachers — to all her ministers, in fact. And I think it was freely acknowledged at the Seminary that Fairhope was the most desirable country field in the State, either for supply or for regular work. We always paid our student preachers well, and that is more than some congregations did.

A ministerial student once referred to the generosity of Fairhope and contrasted it with another church in a good-sized town where he had supplied one Sunday. This young man was working his own way by hard knocks. He kept himself in college only by practising rigid economy and by turning every honest penny possible. When he was invited to supply the pulpit of a rather well-known

church in a town at least one hundred miles from Lexington, he fancied he could make as much as ten dollars clear. He was entertained in the comfortable home of an elder of the church who was also the treasurer. Monday morning after breakfast his host asked him how much his expenses had been. The student answered that six dollars would just about cover his expenses. The elder nodded his head and proceeded to take a buckskin bag out of his desk drawer. He opened a bag which was fairly stuffed with bills and loose change. Separating slowly and painstakingly the one dollar bills from the roll, he smoothed them out carefully — well nigh reverently — one at a time upon his knee until he counted six. Then he pulled the drawstrings of the bag together and handed the minister the six bills with this oracular comment, "The experience, my brother, ought to be worth twenty-five more."

As a matter of fact, the young fellow was out nearly a dollar in actual cash; and as he expressed it, "The wear and tear on my clothing, to boot."

Another young man preached for us a year — a self-made stripling who also had to watch his corners in order to get through his college course. He wore celluloid collars when travelling, to reduce his laundry bills. He wore spotless linen in the pulpit and upon other occasions that required careful attire; but invariably through the week days or on the train, he wore the celluloid collars. One of these collars was once a bad actor in a rather try-

ing experience in Fairhope neighbourhood. He was called from Lexington to conduct the funeral of a little girl whose father had taken kindly to this minister though he, himself, was not a member at Fairhope. The young minister came wearing a celluloid collar which he replaced with a linen one, making very quick change in an upstairs room. Just before going down for the service he wrapped the collar tightly in a newspaper and put it in a little hand valise along with some books and other belongings. This valise he took downstairs and set it in the corner of the room where he was to conduct the service. Just as he was ready to begin and had already opened his Bible, he happened to recall having left in the valise the volume which contained a poem he intended to read. The room was filled with people who watched curiously the minister when he walked over to his valise and opened it. As he reached for the book lo! that collar which he had wrapped up tightly in the newspaper suddenly let go and like a living thing leaped out of the valise, and rolling out on the floor made two complete circuits of the open space where the people were not standing and came at last to a stop in the very centre of the room, and lay there as though resting from the exertion of cycling about so gaily. Now the incident was much more ludicrous to see than it is to tell; the sight of that collar leaping out of the valise, twice circling that room, and coming to a stop in the centre of the floor, was hard on the



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young fellow's nerves. But he met the situation admirably. He captured the collar, put it back in the valise, shut it up safely, and went on with the services as if such a freakish incident was of daily occurrence.

During one of several interims when we were without a regular minister, a student preached a trial sermon that impressed us favourably. He was earnest, at ease, and the subject matter of his sermon was especially good. That afternoon the elders met at Boardman's to consider calling the young man. Sitting in the shade of the big elm trees, they discussed the young preacher. On the whole, they were decidedly favourable to extending the student a call and had practically so decided when Giles Shockley rode up on his sorrel mare. He dismounted, hitched his horse, flung a curt "Howdy, brethren," at the little group, and at once addressed Boardman.

"I'd like to see your copy of *The Living Pulpit*; I loaned mine to Lee Roberts over at South Fork and he still has it."

Boardman went into the house and came out with the volume which is a collection of some twenty-eight sermons by our eminent preachers, and was published in the sixties. Shockley took the book, turned rapidly several pages, found the place he was looking for, glanced at a paragraph or two, and handed the open volume to Boardman.

"There, sir," and Giles pointed a long, bony finger at the open pages. "There, sir, is the ser-

mon we heard in Fairhope meetin'-house this mornin'. I thought I knew where he got it, but I wanted to make sure."

Giles was right. There was the sermon almost word for word as Fairhope people had heard it that morning. Boardman passed the book to Major Meniffee who read it out loud to the little company on the lawn, and when he had finished our elders were unanimous in the opinion that Fairhope could get along without the services of that particular student.

The sermon that evening was not nearly so able as the morning one, which fact led Giles to observe sagely, "That effort, I reckon, was his own."

The young fellow was so greatly disappointed in his failure to receive the call that on his return to Lexington he wrote asking Jacob Boardman the reason. Boardman, who overflowed with the milk of human kindness, possessed also a fine sense of justice, and his answer was but a single line: "The reason why you failed to receive a call to Fairhope is 'Living Pulpit' pages 327-338.

And that answer, I fancy, was sufficient.

It was a student preacher who delivered the most talked of funeral sermon ever preached in our county. He was a very young man whose experience was meagre, but he possessed powers of initiative that were considerable. This incident had for its setting not Fairhope, but one of our congregations in the southern part of the county. That church — South Fork by name — was min-

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istered to by a student preacher who being ill sent as supply his room mate. When this student got off the train at a town on the eastern border of the county, he was told of the sudden death of a prominent member of South Fork Church, and that he would be expected to conduct the funeral service on Sunday afternoon. The man was a prominent farmer, a well-to-do man with wide acquaintance. All funeral services in our county are largely attended and Sunday funerals in particular. On this occasion the church was crowded. There were a dozen or so Fairhope people present: Carter, Goodpasture, Giles Shockley, Major Meniffee, and my father, among others. The young preacher had a great occasion and he proposed to use it to the fullest.

It was a good sermon and wisely so, for in our section a failure at a funeral is much more serious than at a regular service. It was a good sermon, but like the proverbial cow that gave the big bucket of milk and then kicked it over, this minister spoiled it in the end. It happened that this farmer had been married before; and this fact of his first wife's death, together with other incidents of his career, had of course been told to the preacher. Just at the close of the sermon the young minister gazed compassionately upon the widow sitting with the children and other mourners on the front seat; and to the amazement of all his hearers, and the poorly concealed amusement of the irreverent, he commiserated, "You weep and mourn to-day, for

yours is a heavy loss. But let us rejoice for this man's sake. His is all gain: *he is with his first wife now.*"

I don't think the young minister meant to put it that way but he did. And having said it he was wise enough not to attempt a revision. To this day no new minister is permitted to come into our county without being regaled with the account of this incident. For weeks after, it occasioned comment far and wide. The young man who made this unfortunate statement now occupies a rather conspicuous and important pulpit, but I suppose no modicum of success has ever enabled him to quite forget that funeral service.

A student in his junior year at Lexington once conducted a protracted meeting for us which was more than ordinarily successful. He had a wonderful memory, was an interesting talker, and a great lover of poetry, quoting much in his sermons. One night he recited Mrs. Alexander's "Moses," another "Tell Me Ye Winged Winds," and in a sermon on "Mother," he quoted with good effect all of "Rock Me to Sleep, Mother, Rock Me to Sleep." Major Meniffee enjoyed the young fellow immensely, and the meetings were attended by large audiences. There were a number of accessions, and a husband and wife transferred their membership from a neighbouring church between which and Fairhope there was considerable rivalry. It was while this meeting was in progress, and after the husband and wife

had come, that George Van Gorder met Mrs. Jonas Ryland — a prominent member of the neighbouring church referred to above, a peppery soul, and afflicted with a high-pitched, keen, falsetto voice.

“Have you been out to hear our evangelist?” pleasantly enquired George.

Mrs. Ryland gave her head an angry toss and in a higher keyed tone than usual, shrilled back, “No, and I ain’t a-goin’. No need to. I got a book of poetry at home.”

Fairhope favoured good oratory. Like all southern people, we are susceptible to fluent speech and impassioned eloquence. We had for supply one Lord’s day a student known far and wide in college circles for his oratory. He had won several medals, and when he entered the ministry he had no difficulty in securing a church. He was a gifted young fellow with a musical voice and unusual ability in an oratorical way. It happened that at the time this young Beecher visited us the Van Gorders were giving a house party and he was entertained there. There were a half-dozen attractive girls from Covington and others from some of the smaller towns down the State. For that matter, none of the visiting young ladies was more attractive than the Van Gorder girls themselves — Jennie and Louise; Jennie being a belle in our community. This young minister was something of a lady’s man and he took to that house party like a starved pig to a big feed of corn.

The young folks had a very enjoyable Saturday evening together; and on Sunday morning, of course, the entire house party went to church with the Van Gorders. The girls — some eight or nine in number — sat well up toward the front. The meeting had been widely advertised and the young preacher was feeling in fine mettle. He had evidently brought his best sermon and he became obsessed with a great desire to preach so as to leave an indelible impression. He spoke with grace and power, gradually working toward a climax that was striking and meant to be tender and pathetic. He was dwelling on the thought of the brevity of life — its disappointments and its withheld completions, and was contrasting with such fragmentary experiences the fruition of hopes that heaven held for all who are faithful to the end. Then he lost himself in the very sweep of his own eloquence, and instead of saying that there would be no vacant chairs or no broken family links in the Better Land, he said with tremendous fervour and intense feeling at the end of a long paragraph, "My good people, in heaven there will be no broken chairs, no vacant lots, no —"

But the sight of those girls trying their best to keep their faces straight and failing utterly, together with a realisation of what he had said, brought our young orator's conclusion to a most untimely and unrhetical stop. I have seldom felt sorrier for a man. It completely collapsed him. He was like a drowning man who had given up all

hope of rescue and was resignedly going down for the third and last time. The effect of the sermon was spoiled irrevocably. The poor fellow was so embarrassed that when he presided at the communion table a little later, he spilled some of the red wine on the snowy cloth; and if there had been any honourable way of his getting back to Lexington without facing the Van Gorders' house party again, I am sure he would have taken it.

The pastorate of such a church as Fairhope was not without its great compensations. Some time ago I read an article in one of our religious journals by a man now quite noted who as a student was a minister at Fairhope. He was writing about the country congregations and of the experiences of a minister in such fields. Among other things, he said, "The man who goes to the ministry of a city church without ever having been a country pastor is to be pitied. His education is not complete. He is lop-sided. He has missed something fine, something fragrant and beautiful, something that he can get nowhere else. Three years of my own life — three of the greatest and best and most fruitful years — were spent as the minister of a country church, for which I thank God."

All of which leads me to believe that Fairhope has had a part in shaping and sweetening perhaps, the Kingdom of God. And even if that part be small, I cherish the belief that it has been eminently worth while.





# A HOUND OF THE LORD



## A HOUND OF THE LORD

I SUPPOSE that every church has at least one self-appointed heresy hunter who scrutinises the preacher's sermons with painstaking care for possible departures from the straight and narrow path of orthodoxy. Giles Shockley held this office in Fairhope church to the amusement of some of us, the dismay of a few, and the good natured tolerance of all.

In appearance, Giles was a little weazened man; about five feet four inches in height; with a great shock of coarse, black hair which he wore brushed back from his high forehead in pompadour fashion. He was the fiercest looking little man I ever saw. He had a thin hatchet face, a large hooked nose, and little beady, black eyes that fairly bored a hole through any one whom he chanced to believe was unsound in the faith. Giles was nothing if not sound in doctrine, and since his voice was all out of proportion to his body in bigness, it seemed to us that he was pretty nearly all sound. Giles possessed a really extraordinary knowledge of the New Testament, a copy of which he always carried with him — the same marked at certain proof-texts; a fact which Giles took much pride in and often put on exhibition.

Richard Marvin, so long Fairhope's beloved minister — a level-headed, clear-thinking man — once referred in a private conversation to Giles Shockley as "a hound of the Lord" and the phrase

was most appropriate. Giles could follow the scent of heresy as closely as a hound the hot trail of a fox; and in so doing Giles believed himself "not slothful in business, serving the Lord." Of all types of preachers, he most preferred the militant kind and a debate on a religious topic was his delight. Giles' favourite book of the New Testament was Acts of the Apostles, and his favourite chapter was the second; the thirty-eighth verse of the same, his ringing challenge to all seekers after God: "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

In the evangelistic message of our ministers, certain "first principles" of the Gospel were in the earlier days stressed in season and out of season. These first principles were held to be Faith, Repentance, Confession, and Baptism; and were sometimes spoken of as the steps by which the sinner came into the Kingdom. Not long ago I heard a minister say in a sermon at Fairhope that the real first principles of the Gospel are God, Christ, Man, Sin, and Eternal Life; and what we had been pleased to term first principles were forsooth second principles. I do not know as to this. I will leave that to the theologians. But in the early days at Fairhope, whatever the topic of the preacher, he was certain to close his discourse with Faith, Repentance, Confession, and Baptism.

Giles Shockley was a "first principle" man, and

he held tenaciously that no sermon was a Gospel sermon that failed to present these steps into the church. It was his custom to sit in a front pew from which vantage place he followed the words of the preacher with undivided attention. In a way, Giles was a terror to young preachers; for if they misquoted a text or failed to preach the Gospel as Giles believed it, they would be sure to hear from him.

One Lord's day a student-preacher from Lexington was supply at Fairhope as our regular minister was holding a meeting for a church in another part of the State. This supply was a conscientious, earnest, young man; but very timid and self-conscious. In the course of his sermon he quoted several passages of Scripture and before he was through the first one Giles fished out his New Testament with a flourish and turned rapidly to the verses the student was attempting to quote. No sooner was the service over than Giles rushed up to the young fellow and addressed him bluntly.

"Brother, you are in grave danger of God's wrath. You failed to quote God's Word correctly. Don't you know what Almighty God says in Revelation about those who treat His Word so shamefully? Listen!"

And Giles then and there read from his little Testament, in a booming voice that everybody in the meeting-house couldn't help but hear, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add to

them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."

The young minister looked as though he were going to faint. He was white as a sheet, and his speech as he tried to reply was thick as a drunken man's. It was Jacob Boardman who came to his rescue. That dear old saint walked right up past Giles, brushed him and his New Testament aside; and putting one arm around the student's shoulders, he seized his limp hand in his vise-like clasp and congratulated the young preacher warmly.

"My brother, that was a good sermon. You gave us a heap to think about, enough to keep us busy the rest of our lives. Come home to dinner with me; and Giles," the old man turned to that hound of the Lord, "Giles, if you'll put your book up and try to follow Paul's advice — not to behave yourself unseemly — you can come along. Otherwise, not."

And Giles went for, much as he liked to argue, he liked Jacob Boardman's dinners more.

Whenever we had a preacher on trial, Giles was in his element as a sermon-taster. We formed a habit of asking Giles after a trial sermon what he thought of it. The Lord's day Harmon Vaughn preached on trial we were greatly pleased, all except Giles.

"What did you think of him, Giles?" some one asked after the service.

"He won't do," said Giles. "He took his text from the Psalms. The Old Testament is the Jew's Bible, not the Christian's. That fellow ought to hire to a synagogue. He's a rabbi more than a Christian minister."

However, Giles's bark was worse than his bite. Having had his say, Giles usually lapsed into a rather ostentatious resignation; always came to church whether or not he liked the preacher; and if the sermon was other than doctrinal, he sat through it listless-like with a bored expression on his face. But let the preacher grow argumentative, and Giles came to life and interest like a fire horse at the tap of the bell.

In connection with Giles sitting in judgment on trial sermons, there occurred one of the most amusing incidents in Fairhope's history. We were without a regular minister, and a man had come on trial; a preacher, too, of some experience and no little ability — one known to us only by reputation. It was on a Lord's day in early fall. The meeting-house was crowded and Giles Shockley sat in his seat of the mighty, ready to approve or damn as the case might warrant. The time for the sermon came; the preacher arose and gave out as his text, Roman 13: 8, "Owe no man anything." Then, for half an hour, he preached against the sin of debt and especially of church members failing to pay their just obligations. It was the first

and last sermon on that topic I ever heard in Fairhope, and a most unusual subject for a trial sermon. Some reflection, however, leads me to believe this theme for a trial sermon was wisely chosen. It would have been quite impossible to preach such a sermon among a people the minister knew without a feeling that it was personal and meant to be such.

Now Giles Shockley was notoriously lax about paying his debts. He was not dishonest exactly but as George Van Gorder once put it, "Giles is as slow about paying his debts as sorghum molasses in zero weather." And Carter Goodpasture in Beagle's store one day, happening to see a bill against Giles, advised Beagle to "write Giles Shockley's bills on parchment so as to save stationery."

Imagine Giles listening critically to a sermon on such a subject! The preacher struck out from the shoulder, too, and among other things he said that a church member who made himself conspicuous by occupying a front seat and could and wouldn't pay his debts, did the cause more harm than an out and out infidel. Poor Giles! The preacher could not have hit him harder in a tenderer spot if he had known all about him. At first Giles' slight figure seemed to dwindle and he sank deep down in his pew. Then he stiffened his body, sat bolt upright, and with poorly simulated relish listened to what must have been the most depressing sermon he ever heard. All over the



church the situation was sensed at once. Some of the irreverent folks nudged one another and grinned broadly. Mother and Father exchanged knowing glances, and as I looked at the benevolent face of Jacob Boardman — apparently deeply interested in the sermon — I saw the play of a humorous twinkle in his calm grey eyes.

As soon as the service was over Giles made for the door as quickly as he could without attracting further attention. He tarried very little on the way and once outside hurried to his horse, unhitched her, and swung into the saddle. Just then Carter Goodpasture hailed him.

“Say, Giles, how did you like *that* sermon?”

Giles’ reply was not audible, but the look he flung at Carter was almost profane. He gave his sorrel mare a dig in the flank and went clattering off down the pike in a cloud of dust.

We failed to secure this preacher, though it was not our fault. He was too high-priced. I suppose Giles was immensely relieved when he heard that we were not to have as minister a man who preached on the evil of debt with as much vigour as other ministers preached on hell.

Only once did the mild tolerance of Fairhope folks for Giles’ high-handed ways give place to well defined disciplinary measures. It all came about through Giles’ suspicion of Harmon Vaughn’s orthodoxy. Vaughn was the first of our younger ministers to give a rather wider interpretation to the Gospel message than we had been

accustomed to hear. Moreover, he preached much on the practical phases of the Christian faith and seldom on doctrinal topics. There was distinctly a new note in Vaughn's preaching; and none of the old militant, dogmatic sort. A favourite theme with Vaughn was that of Prayer, and he was the first minister to introduce into Fairhope's service the repeating of the Lord's Prayer in unison by the congregation.

Giles was ill at ease from the first at this new order of things, and let it be known that in his opinion Vaughn was "wise above that which is written." At first our people paid little attention to these criticisms for we were used to Giles and had every confidence in Vaughn. Then Giles began to exhibit a clipping of an article Vaughn had written for *The Christian Record*. In this article the young preacher protested against what he called "an overstressing of primary principles and a consequent neglect of Christian conduct and development in the devotional." In one paragraph of the article Vaughn had used this sentence, "I believe we might profitably keep baptism in the background." One Lord's day Giles read this clipping to a little group of our members at a basket-meeting given by a neighbouring church; and then proceeded to enlarge on Vaughn's statement on baptism, growing eloquent as he proceeded.

"You hear this, brethren!" he exclaimed. "Keep baptism in the background! Baptism in

the background! Wasn't Christ baptised? Didn't He tell us to preach the Gospel to all nations, baptisin' them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Why this man Vaughn may be one of those wolves that the Apostles said would come among us in the latter days."

It was at this point that a Fairhope man interrupted Giles and advised him to put the paper in his pocket and attend to his own business. Giles mumbled something about this being his business. The outcome of it was that our elders — Jacob Boardman, Judge Patton, Clay Meniffee, and my father — invited Giles to meet with them in a conference of a private nature. We never knew exactly what took place there; though the report sifted its way through the congregation that Jacob Boardman, speaking for the eldership, gave Giles some very plain and vigorous advice and then took his three brother-elders and Giles, also, home to dinner with him and the matter was a closed incident.

Giles never went any further in his attempt to undermine Vaughn for heresy in the matter of baptism or anything else. Surprising as it may seem in view of his early suspicion, he actually warmed up to Harmon Vaughn and came to regard him affectionately. The change was not gradual; it was sudden, but sure. And the reason was a striking sermon that Vaughn preached on the Divinity of Christ. The argument was not especially new, but there was an originality of

arrangement; and it was delivered with so much force and fire that Giles was captivated. From the hour of that sermon's delivery he became a stout champion of Harmon Vaughn.

A little more than a year after Shockley's change toward Vaughn, the former took to his bed with a malady that perplexed and baffled the doctors and it soon became apparent that he could not get well. Vaughn went to see him often, read selections from the Scriptures, and prayed with him. Our hound of the Lord knew the end was coming so found great comfort in the minister's visits. Yet, to the last he retained his eccentricities and faint traces of his heresy hunting.

The day before his passing Vaughn was with him for several hours, in the course of which he read from the Scriptures and offered prayer at his bedside. Familiar with Shockley's favourite passages the young minister opened his New Testament and after reading the eighth chapter of Romans, turned to Acts and began to read the second chapter. Giles feebly motioned him to stop.

"Not to-day, Brother Vaughn. It's a great chapter. You do well to preach from it often. But I wish you'd turn to Luke fifteen and read me that instead; and read it all — even the part about the prodigal's brother."

Vaughn read — read it all — read it tenderly. The sick man listened attentively to the preacher's words. When he had finished Giles spoke, but in

tones so weak and faint as scarcely to resemble his once strong voice.

“Thank ye, Brother Vaughn. Thank ye. You’ve been good to come and see me often. I didn’t like ye at first. I believed ye were not true to the Gospel, but I’ll take it back. Ye air. Your sermon on the Divinity of Jesus Christ proved that ye air. But, Brother Vaughn,”—Giles’ black eyes were fixed upon the serious face of the minister bent now so close to his own,—“my advice to you as a dying man is to press first principles a *leetle more*.”

The next day Giles died. We gave him a large funeral; and forgetting his failings, remembered only his virtues. In Fairhope meeting-house the Lord’s day after Giles Shockley’s death, as worship began, I glanced toward the pew the little man had occupied for so many years, and a lump came into my throat, and I saw but dimly through the mists his vacant place.



# A MODERN ENOCH





## A MODERN ENOCH

JACOB BOARDMAN was for forty-five years a member of Fairhope, and for thirty-seven years an elder. A goodlier, patienter man never lived. He was of Welsh descent on his father's side and his mother was Scotch and deeply religious. He was a Pennsylvanian by birth, and when a young man he came to northern Kentucky. By trade he was a wagon-maker, but he took up farming shortly after his arrival in Boone County and became one of our substantial men, rearing a large family in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and contributing in numerous ways to the good of the community.

In appearance Jacob Boardman looked the great and good soul he was. In later life he resembled the pictures of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was large of frame; a strong, vigorous man. His head was massive, his nose prominent and aquiline, and his face in a rugged way was almost classic. With the exception of side whiskers, "squirrel tails" he called them, his face was clean shaven with a wide expressive mouth and strong resolute chin. His eyes were especially notable, being deep blue in colour and twinkling always with good humour and affection for all mankind. Save a slight palsy which affected his hands and made him a trifle unsteady on his feet, this man passed his three score and ten with eyes undimmed and much of his natural force unabated.

Jacob Boardman's life was a curious compound of joys and sorrows, of success and failure. Burdens that would have crushed completely a less resolute soul, he carried with singular and unruffled patience to the end. Twice he faced bankruptcy through the financial failure of friends whose promissory notes he had endorsed. In one instance he was saved from the utter loss of all his earthly possessions by the sudden death in a railway accident of the man he had befriended and whose life insurance policy to the amount of two-thirds of the debt had been made over to his benefactor. In the other instance only the sale of a big part of his land saved him from a financial crash. For twenty years his faithful wife was a helpless invalid and his oldest son, John — just as he was coming into his majority — was drowned in the Ohio River during one of the spring floods. Another son, Jerome, was left after a short and critical illness, a helpless cripple for life; and no one whoever heard Jacob Boardman refer to him as "my afflicted son" could ever forget the exquisite tenderness of his voice. Then his favourite daughter, Mary, married unwisely; and her life was made miserable by the scoundrel-husband who a little while before he abandoned her, forged the note of his father-in-law for a thousand dollars and got safely away with the money. Yet, notwithstanding his misfortunes, Jacob Boardman's life was lived joyfully in his Christian faith and without loss of confidence in his fellow-men. Such

another optimist it has never been my good fortune to know. Those eyes could see a long way off, past the disappointments of the present to the New Jerusalem God was rearing for His children. And a more playful, even roguish man never lived.

Boardman was a kind of lay-preacher. He could make a very acceptable speech on most any Biblical topic; and occasionally when no preacher was available he would, if requested, conduct a funeral service. He could do this as well as many a minister and better than some I have known. In public prayer he was exceptionally gifted and on numerous occasions I have known him to lead a congregation to the throne of God in simple, yet powerful prayer.

His unfailing charity was perhaps never more characteristically shown than at Len Crutcher's funeral. Len was one of our community's ne'er-do-wells, a little-account sort of man, lazy, improvident, and a notorious prevaricator. But, like many another shiftless man, he was blessed with as good a wife as ever any man had. Sarah Crutcher was as industrious as Len was lazy, and for her sake we were all inclined to be more tolerant of her husband's trifling ways than we would otherwise have been. Sarah asked Jacob to speak a few words and offer a prayer at Len's graveside and, of course, that dear old saint promised to comply with her request. When it was noised about that Jacob Boardman was going to speak at Len's funeral we agreed that the old man had

undertaken a difficult task. A minister who was unacquainted with Crutcher's life might have generalised glitteringly and so made out well enough, and even if he eulogised him some we would have excused it on the grounds that he didn't know Len. But our Modern Enoch knew all about Len Crutcher, knew him as George Van Gorder put it "to the tune of two hundred dollars." And so this was the sort of man Jacob Boardman had for subject in Fairhope cemetery one afternoon late in September in the presence of nearly one hundred neighbours brought together through commingled curiosity and concern.

With uncovered head, his grey hair fluttering in the soft breezes that swept across the level fields, the old man spoke in his straight-forward, whole-hearted fashion.

"Neighbours and friends," he said, "we have come to lay away all that is mortal of Len Crutcher, and comfort as best we can his faithful wife. I want to say a word or two about him to-day that I think ought to be said. Every man has at least one good point and Len had his."

This statement caused a mild flurry among us, and I suppose nearly every man and woman present — excepting perhaps Sarah Crutcher — was hard driven to call up a single good point of Len's. The silence was intense. We were all ears. Jacob continued:

"Len was a good whittler, I may say an accomplished whittler; in fact, the best all-round

whittler this community has ever known. I don't know how many elder pop-guns and willow whistles Len made for the children of this neighbourhood, but I reckon a hundred at least. You all will recollect the Perkinses that used to live down on Garrison. There was a big family of 'em and they were as bad off as Job's turkey. Poor little chaps! One day I happened to pass by that place and what should I see but the whole passel gathered about Len Crutcher who was a-whittlin' 'em out windmills as fast as he could make the shavin's fly. Many a little shaver's had a heap of fun all because Len Crutcher whittled him out a toy, and I'm believin' the good Lord'll not forget even a willow whistle whittled out for the least of His children. Brethren, let us pray."

As I bowed my head I saw Major Meniffee jabbing his handkerchief into his eyes, and then somehow — well, like the blind man of Bethsaida, I saw men as trees.

Many men cease to grow in mind, especially in their religious views as they grow older. But not so with Jacob Boardman. He grew ampler in mind and soul as the years came and went. Unlike the figure on the coin, he looked forward always. One Lord's day a number of us were at the Boardmans for dinner, Giles Shockley among others. The conversation turned to some of the newer methods in Sunday School work. Giles — always a stickler for the old paths — claimed to be too old to learn new ways and in justification of his

views quoted the familiar adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks."

"No, Giles," Boardman rejoined, his eyes twinkling merrily, "you can't, that's a fact. But the reason you can't is not because the dog's old, mind you; but because he knows a lot of old tricks and is too lazy to learn any new ones."

Our modern Enoch was a generous man in his gifts, and particularly so with his church. Long before the tithe was taught from the pulpit, Jacob Boardman gave more than that proportion of his income to the Lord's work. He was the most liberal member at Fairhope though by no means the wealthiest. He was one of the few men I have known who would make a note at the bank in order to pay a church pledge or make a gift for foreign missions. He was jealous for the dignity and credit of the church in financial affairs. I once heard him make a plea in Fairhope meeting-house for more liberal subscriptions in which he said, "We talk about being as poor as a church mouse. Why should a church mouse be poorer than any other mouse? For my part, I believe a church mouse ought to be the fattest, sleekest-looking mouse in the land and if we all did our bounden duty that proverb — or whatever you call it — 'poor as a church mouse' — would die a natural death."

As the old man thus spoke he beamed benignly. Carter Goodpasture, who was sitting next to me, leaned over and whispered in my ear, "Davy, no

man ever was as good as Jacob Boardman looks."

Jacob Boardman never turned from his door a seeker for food or lodging no matter how untoward the seeker's appearance or condition. His reason for holding himself rigidly to this rule was due to his generous spirit of hospitality; but more to an experience of his early manhood while travelling in the West. He once found himself in a sparsely settled portion of Kansas with night coming on and no signs of a habitation of any sort in sight. He was on horseback and in a country entirely new to him. About midnight he came upon a little sod house where he was cordially received by the lone occupant — a melancholy visaged man who saw that his nocturnal guest was made comfortable. In the morning Boardman attempted to pay for his lodging but his host would accept nothing save the promise that Boardman would never turn away a stranger from his own door. That promise our Modern Enoch faithfully made and kept, and it was as if by some mysterious process that that promise had been communicated to every member of the tramping fraternity. All sorts of men: pedlars, agents, and occasionally a woman itinerant, seemed instinctively to turn aside when they came to Boardman's house by the side of the road. Moreover, for a radius of some five or six miles in every direction, various families helped to supply the Boardman home with guests of this kind by informing enquirers for lodging that Jacob Boardman never turned any one away.

Some of these guests that fate sent the Boardmans were to say the least annoying and a few of them paid their host for his kindnesses in strange ways. One night there stopped a pilgrim of the pike who claimed to be some sort of Holiness preacher. On going to his room this devout itinerant prayed so loud and long that he disturbed the entire household. But before daybreak he departed with a package of a half-dozen new shirts which his host had purchased two days before in Cincinnati.

Another whilesome guest — a sort of castaway, weather-beaten, and eccentric — was so pleased with his entertainment that he insisted on settling down there for the rest of his days and was finally removed to the county infirmary with some difficulty.

Finally in order to protect his family, but still keep his promise, Boardman built a one-room structure in the yard back of his house, furnished it simply but comfortably, and lodged his itinerant guests there. It was in connection with this practice to turn no one away from his door that a few of us made the old gentleman a victim of a practical joke.

Carter Goodpasture and George Van Gorder had been spending the day with us and the former was the originator of a plan to test out the Boardman hospitality to the fullest. My sister Alice, who had taken part in private theatricals and who had



some histrionic ability, was the star performer. By the help of a grey wig, a rakish old bonnet, a plaid shawl, a black skirt soiled and frayed around the edges, she looked very much like some poor outcast woman. To complete her disguise she rubbed a small amount of soot over her cheeks and on this background painted at irregular intervals ugly splotches of red, giving them special prominence on her chin and forehead. Over her dark and speckled countenance she fastened a veil which once had been black but was then green with age. Bending nearly double and leaning on a gnarled staff, it was a veritable scare crow that made its way up to the Boardmans' front door in the twilight of a November day. We had taken Mrs. Boardman into the secret and her interest in the hoax was keen. Alice knocked sharply and when Jacob opened the door she asked in a tremulous voice, "Good sir, may I have lodging for the night?"

The old man peered at her curiously. The disguise was perfect. She was, indeed, a very repellent old hag. Jacob threw open the door, invited her inside, and bade her be seated. She explained that she was from over the river on her way to visit her daughter at Petersburg; but was ill, could go no farther, and was seeking lodging for the night.

"Sir," she said, simulating the high, tremulous voice of an old and feeble woman, "I'm afeard

I'm goin' to be sick. I'm afeard I've got some-thin' catchin.' Do you know small-pox when you sees it? "

Just then she raised her veil disclosing those terrible splotches against the background of what looked like a very dirty skin. For once in his life the old man seemed nonplussed. He got up from his chair plainly agitated; but before he could make any reply Alice broke into peals of laughter, threw off her bonnet, veil and shawl; while the half-dozen conspirators who had remained on the outside filed into the room and mingled their laughter with the rest. No one enjoyed the joke more than Jacob Boardman. He laughed long and heartily. By-and-bye, Carter Goodpasture ventured the remark, "Boardman, I reckon you'd keep the devil himself, if he asked for lodging! "

The old man's eyes twinkled and he chuckled, "Well, Carter, I reckon I've entertained the old Harry unawares several times."

Jacob's optimism was of a kind that made cheerfulness contagious. For many years he always incorporated one sentence in his prayers at Fairhope meeting-house. "Lord," he would pray, "we thank Thee for this beautiful day." Sunshine or storm, rain or snow, stifling heat or bitter cold, it was all the same to that serene soul, it was a "beautiful day."

One midsummer when the corn was in tassel and the prospect for a big yield never better, a terrific hail storm swept our community. It wrought havoc

on all sides, but nowhere more seriously than in a forty acre field of flourishing corn belonging to him. It cut the corn into ribbons, levelled most of the stalks with the ground, practically ruining the crop. The storm came on Saturday, and the following Lord's day Jacob was in his place at church. At the communion table he offered thanks for the loaf and he prefaced his prayer with a sentence which led us to wonder if a more trustful soul ever breathed.

"Lord," he prayed, "we thank Thee for the sunshine, the rain, and the *hail*." There was not the slightest quaver to his voice when he pronounced the word "hail," and his countenance was as free from scowl or frown as is the month of July in northern Kentucky from a killing frost.

Jacob Boardman's level-headedness and fine Christian spirit were never seen to better advantage than on an occasion when the matter of disciplining some of Fairhope's young people for dancing was an issue. To-day I do not know of any church — either city or rural — which disciplines its young people for indulgence in popular amusements; but twenty-five years ago it was not an unusual thing for some of our rural churches to take such action. One of our neighbouring churches withdrew membership from three or four young people from one family for dancing, and yet permitted the older members of that family to retain their standing in the church although they played cards. The act of this congregation, so in-

consistent and unwise, was productive of much ill-feeling and in the end resulted in the entire family leaving that church; the older people putting their membership with another congregation, and the young people taking no further interest in the church. So far as the most of us were able to see, the act of this neighbouring church was productive of far more harm than good.

Only once did popular amusements become an issue at Fairhope, and how Jacob Boardman met it is an interesting episode in the annals of our congregation. In the early nineties several of our young people — at least two from the families of Fairhope's elders — attended dancing parties, some of them participating. The dances for the most part were the old-fashioned kind with the Virginia Reel as a special favourite. The matter came to be talked about a great deal and called forth considerable criticism from some of our members. The continual agitation brought the matter at last before a called meeting of Fairhope's board of officers which was composed of the elders and the deacons. Major Meniffee presided and after calling on Jacob Boardman for prayer, the Major stated briefly the object of the meeting, and asked for a free expression of opinion from those present. Giles Shockley was very naturally present at this meeting and was in favour of disciplining the young people. He took the position that the Scriptures clearly indicated such procedure, that Paul had advised the churches to withdraw from every

one who walked disorderly, and that in his opinion dancing was disorderly to a shameful degree.

Franklin Van Pelt — one of our substantial members — a man with a strain of severity in his make-up — was also of the opinion that the young people should be dealt with summarily. He held that church membership ought to mean something: that such amusements were worldly, and that the church and the world were at enmity. In fact, Van Pelt went so far as to move that the guilty parties be suspended for six months and restored to full membership only on their full promise not to have any part in worldly amusements.

It was at this juncture that Jacob Boardman got up. The old man spoke slowly, very kindly, yet emphatically. He said that he had never danced, didn't know one card from another, and with the exception of seeing Joe Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle" he had never been to the theatre in his life. But he was most decidedly opposed to any action on the part of the church toward suspending the young people from church for dancing or any other popular amusement. He held that the Scripture as cited by Giles Shockley did not apply to the case in hand; that the spirit of Christ was all the other way; that the young people needed in those tender years of their lives the help of the church, not its opposition; and that no more un-Christlike thing could be done than for a church of Christ to withdraw fellowship from the young lives committed to its love and care. As he ap-

proached the conclusion, the old man warmed up.

"Brethren," he admonished, "if we are going to discipline our members in this way let's start with the old members — not the young. And first of all we might start with us elders. We are none too good, and there is not one of us that doesn't have some besetting sin. For example, now there is Major Meniffee — one of the grandest men we have. Yet, the Major takes his toddy, we all know that; and while I don't suppose he was ever intoxicated in his life, yet the Major knows as well as I do that that is a bad example for the young.

"Then there is Judge Patton," he continued. "The Judge does like horse flesh powerfully well, and as we all know he races some of his own horses. And I suppose there isn't anything the Judge takes more pride in than the prizes he has pulled down at the County Fairs with that speedy little mare of his, Jenny Lind. Probably the Judge never gambled on a horse of his own or any other; but horse racing — even of a genteel sort — is not the best business for an elder of a church. Nobody knows that better than the Judge, himself.

"Then, here is my faithful neighbour, David," he said, at the same time putting his hand affectionately on my father's shoulder. "David's the best neighbour in the world, and one of the best citizens we ever had in this county. But David's not over enthusiastic about foreign missions, and if he's ever made a decent gift for the heathen abroad I've never heard of it.

“And as for myself, I —” Every man there unconsciously bent forward, curious to learn what Jacob Boardman’s besetting sin was. “And I,” confessed the old man, “why, I chew tobacco, and even an Arkansas razor-back hog won’t do that!”

That meeting adjourned without any action in disciplining a half-dozen of our young people. But I happen to know that Jacob Boardman saw and talked with each one of those young folks. What he said to all of them I do not know, but what he said to one I remember to this present hour and I do not think I shall ever forget it. God be praised for such a man!

Jacob Boardman’s passing was as his stay in this world: patient, unafraid, with something of the playful spirit which had made him so beloved among us. His last word — if one could call it a word — was characteristic of the man. His illness was of short duration and from the first critical in the extreme. His last day on earth he lay quiet and in a stupor, apparently suffering not the slightest pain. Toward evening he seemed to be just alive and the members of the family were about his bed. He lay with his eyes closed, his breathing so gentle as to be scarcely observable. Anxiously the grief-stricken family bent over him, seeking eagerly for the slightest evidences of life. He opened wide his eyes and for a single second seemed dazed and unable to comprehend. Then hearty recognition came into those steady blue eyes and pursing his lips as if playing “hide and seek” with

a little child, he said very gently and distinctly "Booh!" Then observing the astonishment written large on the faces of his loved ones, the fine old countenance relaxed and a most beautiful smile spread over the familiar features, the weary eyes closed never to open again on the scenes of time and change.

Thus died Jacob Boardman, died as he had lived. For all of his life he had been saying "Booh" to the burdens and sorrows and disappointments that had so often confronted him; and of all the men and women I have known, no one was so well prepared to say "Booh," to death as our Modern Enoch.



# MAJOR MENIFEE'S BOY



## MAJOR MENIFEE'S BOY

MAJOR H. CLAY MENIFEE, the most cultured and polished of Fairhope's men, still abides in the flesh — the sole survivor of a group of men who were prominent figures in our community forty years ago. He was a student of our famous old college referred to elsewhere in these annals, but in his second year the Civil War broke out and this dashing nineteen year old youth threw himself heart and soul into the cause of the Southland. He fought all through the bloody conflict; was wounded at the battle of Shiloh; and when the war closed he came out a major, though not yet twenty-four years old.

The Menifees have long resided in northern Kentucky and Oak Knoll — their fine old homestead — is about the only house left showing the style of architecture which prevailed in the further south during the ante-bellum days. Judge Stanhope Meniffee, the Major's father, died when I was a small boy and I have only a hazy memory of how he looked; but I have heard my father and mother as well as the Major, talk a great deal about him.

Judge Meniffee had been a friend and enthusiastic admirer of Henry Clay and once entertained that distinguished statesman at Oak Knoll. One of the keenest disappointments of Meniffee's life was Mr. Clay's failure to reach the presidency. Quite naturally, Judge Meniffee named his first and

only son Henry Clay, and that son grew up to revere fully as much as his father the traditions and memories of the great Kentucky orator.

After the war, Major Meniffee practised law in Lexington and there he married a lovely girl who was an accomplished dramatic reader. They went to Europe on their honeymoon and on their return settled in Lexington. One year later the beautiful young wife died, leaving a baby boy who was named Henry Clay Junior. The death of his wife prostrated Major Meniffee and radically changed his life plans. He gave up his law office and took up his residence at the old homestead. With an unmarried sister, Clara, to look after little Henry Clay Junior, and two or three negro families on the place as servants in the house and help about the farm, the Major settled for life in Fairhope's community. Our neighbourhood welcomed the Major warmly and his return to the old home was an epoch in our community life. He supplied to our section of the State something of the old tone and quality which with his polished manners and outlook upon the world, became to us a thing of pride. His was one of the few old families that preserved the traditions and customs dear to the southern heart and so much admired by people everywhere. No visitor's sojourn in our community was complete until he had partaken of the Major's hospitality. For many years the Major was the only man in our community who wore — without fail — to church and other formal gather-

ings a long-tailed, double-breasted, frock coat with a white waist-coat and grey worsted trousers. Sometimes he varied the frock with a shad-bellied coat which style well became his rather portly figure. When he went into the city or to Lexington, or took a trip of moment, he wore a silk hat and carried a cane. He wore a moustache and a short, pointed beard which early turned from black to grey. To this day his complexion is fresh and ruddy, and his eyes are full of sparkle. There is an indefinable charm about the Major; he carries atmosphere; he is an interesting and gallant gentleman.

The Major's love for his son was touching. He idolised him, and from the hour of his birth his career was planned in detail. He should study law. He should be an orator! He should be a public man! He should go into politics! And maybe some day be governor of the State, or United States senator! Who knew what the boy might not do? Had he not the finest heritage and an environment that was all that could be desired!

To this motherless boy Miss Clara Meniffee was a second mother. If the Major was a gentleman of the old school, his sister was a lady of the same type. She was a lover of polite literature; a great admirer of the English poets; and shortly after Henry Clay Junior learned to read, Aunt Clara had him memorising Pope, Dryden, and Shakespeare. The boy grew up, as it seemed, favoured by God and man. Even as a little lad he

showed the favour of the Creator. His face was moulded and rounded out like the marble statues of the Greek youths. He had the wide orator's mouth, and clear, dark eyes that could flash fire when he was aroused. He took to public speaking just as naturally and as soon as the duckling takes to water. From the time Henry Clay Junior started to the district school till he entered high school in Covington, there was never any speaking programme in Fairhope community that he did not have the prominent place. He memorised easily and retained wonderfully what he read. Even as a little boy he declaimed with grace, simplicity, and force. He was unaffected, genuine, and lovable; and became the pride of our entire community. We saw that he had in him the making of a great public speaker, and we rejoiced whole-heartedly in the modest and yet radiant enthusiasm of his father.

When Henry Clay Junior was about fourteen and ready to start into high school at Covington, there occurred an event that greatly influenced his life. Richard Marvin was holding a protracted meeting at Fairhope and the interest was marked. Young Meniffee had been reared in the church and had been taken there first as a mere child. He made confession of faith the first Sunday of the meeting, much to the joy of our people and the deep emotion of his father and Aunt Clara. That very afternoon on the way to the river to be baptised, Henry Clay Junior confided to his father

that he purposed giving himself to the ministry instead of to law; and so sincere and earnest was the lad in his confidence that the Major assured him since it was his choice of careers he should follow his inclination and receive his father's support. So it became known to our community that Henry Clay Junior was to be a preacher and not a lawyer. Fairhope people were greatly pleased with this change in the life plans of the favoured lad whom we all so greatly loved. Jacob Boardman informed my father that he had expected just such a decision on the boy's part, and both to Boardman and my father Major Meniffee declared his purpose freely.

"The boy wants to preach," he said, "and preach he shall! There never has yet been a preacher among the Meniffees and it's time there was one, and he must be a good one. I'll give Henry Clay Junior the best college and university training possible and when I'm through, together with what God's done for him, what his mother did for him, and what he'll do for himself, he'll grace Central's pulpit at Cincinnati or any other pulpit in the land."

Then in the next breath the Major begged pardon for what might have seemed a boastful spirit. Bless the gallant gentleman! I always felt that Henry Clay Junior was mighty lucky to have such a father.

Henry Clay Junior finished the four years high school course in Covington in three years, sweep-

ing before him as he went along all the prizes in debate and oratory, and the while he continued to grow in favour with God and man. By the end of his high school course he had grown almost as tall as his father — and the Major is a six footer. His fine face grew in mobility; his voice was a rich baritone, musical, mellifluous; and he was as likable as ever. There was nothing stiff or formal about him; he overflowed with fun and his laugh was contagious, so hearty it was. He was active in church work in the city, often spoke at Christian Endeavour meetings, presided as toastmaster at banquets, and was leader in classes; all the while bending everything toward his chosen career — the ministry. Richard Marvin greatly loved the boy, who in turn regarded him almost as a demigod. He used to spend frequent evenings at the Marvin home conversing about prominent ministers, the construction of sermons and books, and the various phases of a minister's career.

Not only our community idolised and loved this lad, but there was one especially whose interest in Henry Clay Junior was very considerable. Judge Patton lived just opposite Meniffee's and his youngest daughter, Lucy, and Henry Clay Junior were about the same age. As children, they played together and were sweethearts even as romping playmates. When young Meniffee was in high school in Covington, Lucy was in a boarding school in Cincinnati; for as Major Meniffee trained his son



for the ministry, Judge Patton fitted Lucy to be Henry Clay Junior's wife, for it was very early accepted in our community that these two young people would marry. Neither one of them ever had another love affair, so far as we knew. Lucy was the first girl that Henry Clay Junior ever took to a party, and Carter Goodpasture once said that if ever matches were made in heaven that of Henry Clay Meniffee Junior and Lucy Patton was one such. They were very different in temperament: he was full of life, playful, and buoyant of nature; she was a quiet girl, and grew up to be a demure young woman, sweet and winsome. She was a blonde — not beautiful like Jennie Van Gorder, and lacked her dash and brilliance. She was an accomplished musician and possessed a singing voice of uncommon sweetness.

When Henry Clay Junior entered college at Lexington in the fall, Lucy Patton was enrolled as a student in the Women's College affiliated with the university. Fairhope followed with deep and abiding interest the careers of these young people who were our joy and pride. We heard from the Major or Miss Clara — usually from both — of the success Henry Clay Junior met with from the first. We learned the name of his literary society, his Greek letter fraternity, and of his progress in his studies. We knew of his entrance into the primary for the inter-collegiate oratorical contest, and of his easy triumph in that skirmish. Then we

learned the date of the inter-collegiate contest and for that event Major Meniffee, Aunt Clara, Richard Marvin, and I journeyed to Lexington.

That inter-collegiate oratorical contest was a memorable affair, colourful, and vociferous. Never shall I forget it. Morrison Chapel was crowded with buoyant, effervescing young life. The noise of the rooters from the various institutions represented was deafening. There were streaming banners and college yells in profusion. The excitement was intense. The Major, Miss Clara, Richard Marvin, and I were honoured with seats well toward the front. There were six contestants and Henry Clay Junior was his glorious self. The other speakers were good, two of them especially so; but from the moment Henry Clay Junior faced that audience and uttered the first sentence of his oration, I knew the prize was won. His theme was "Men Rise on Stepping Stones of Their Dead Selves to Higher Things." He showed the uses of adversity, the making of character in the overcoming of difficulties. He was at perfect ease, there was no straining for effect. At times he grew impassioned, and I could feel the subtle influence of his magnetism. The Major became restless, and I could see by the expression of his face that he was nervous; but pride and love shone in his eyes. As for Aunt Clara, she sat there prim and proud, looking upon her foster son in frankest adoration. Henry Clay Junior won, and immediately the chapel became a perfect tide of

struggling humanity. The lucky fellow was seized by his college mates and hoisted upon their shoulders, while another group unceremoniously gathered up the Major and carried him out in the hall. The cheering and the waving of banners was a perfect pandemonium. The Major's cheeks were flushed; his fine, immaculate shirt bosom crumpled. It was a great moment in his life. If it had been at all proper, I am sure the boys would have served Miss Clara precisely as they did Henry Clay Junior and the Major. As it was, Miss Clara was the centre of a group of young fellows who all but hugged and kissed her with the untrammelled ardour and enthusiasm of college boys. Richard Marvin was so pleased with the outcome that he hugged me, beat on the floor with his cane, and shouted as loud as any sophomore in the chapel.

The oratorical contest was in March. Late in May of the same year Henry Clay Junior preached his first sermon in Fairhope meeting-house. He had been speaking at religious meetings at the university, in the churches at Lexington, and had on several occasions supplied pulpits for some of the students, but this was his first appearance in Fairhope's pulpit. It was a radiantly beautiful day. Fairhope looked her fairest. The green in tree and field was velvety in its hue. The whistle of the cardinal and the sweet warble of the bluebird made music in the trees about the church. The fragrance of apple blossoms was on the breezes and the sunshine was golden and glorious. The meeting-house

was crowded. There were people present from nearby churches and some from points farther distant. The occasion was such as might be expected to bring out the very best that was in this gifted lad. Lucy Patton was back from Lexington and sat in the choir. I could hear her high, clear voice as we sang,

“ Beautiful Valley of Eden,  
Sweet is thy noon-tide calm.”

Jacob Boardman was in his place, Giles Shockley sat in the “seat of the mighty.” It was a sympathetic congregation, and there was not a man or woman there that had aught but pride and love in their hearts for Henry Clay Junior. I remember his text, for it was a familiar one. It was John, the thirteenth chapter, thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth verses, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

I wish I could repeat that sermon. I can only tell that I felt its power, that in its very simplicity there was a charm that held us. There were some places in it exceedingly tender, and as we listened we knew that in this lad was genius, wonderful gift of speech; and I speculated whether any preacher ever gave more promise than Henry Clay Junior. I can see now the faces of the people as I recall that day; and out of the many I can see three

with peculiar distinctness. One of them was Major Meniffee. As he sat there and listened, I saw his strong, ruddy face moistened with tears; and I wondered then — as I wonder now — if there arose before him the vision of the young and beautiful wife who gave her life for her child? There was Aunt Clara, pride and joy written all over her aristocratic features. And I see the spirituelle face of Lucy Patton. There I saw that which was in neither the face of the Major nor Aunt Clara's. Just what it was, I cannot say; but joy and pride and love were all there, and more!

That summer came and went, and the sombre tinge of autumn began to appear upon field and tree. In September Lucy Patton and Henry Clay Junior returned to Lexington. Scarcely a month had passed before we learned one day from the Major that typhoid fever had broken out among the students at the University and that of the boys who boarded at the dormitory, some thirty were in the Good Samaritan Hospital smitten with the fever. From the first the Major was concerned although Henry Clay Junior did not board at the dormitory. Still, he had several friends who lived there and with whom he frequently visited and dined. Thus the Major and Miss Clara were naturally fearful.

In a day or two their fears were realised, for there came a telegram saying that Henry Clay Junior had taken the fever and was in the hospital. The Major and Miss Clara left that night for Lex-

ington and then for some days we watched the mails eagerly. We received several reports that were encouraging. Then there came a brief letter to Judge Patton from the Major in which he expressed dissatisfaction with the progress the boy was making. The next day father had a post card saying Henry Clay Junior was not doing so well. Then for two days we had no word at all.

Well do I remember the evening of October 28 of that year. Supper was over, but we were sitting about the table talking. My sister Alice had just asked if any news had come from Lexington when there was a loud knock at the side door and before any of us could answer it, the door opened and Jacob Boardman groped his way like a drunken man into the room. His fine old face was pallid and his eyes were red.

"Dave," he cried, "he's gone. The lad's gone. Henry Clay Junior is dead." And then he sank into a chair, burying his face in his hands and sobbing like a child.

We were dumb with the shock of it all, though father finally found his voice and said in a low tone as if to himself, "My God, what will the Major do?"

Then my sister Alice broke out in violent weeping. "Oh, poor Lucy Patton," she wailed.

By and by Jacob Boardman got control of himself sufficiently to tell us the telegram had come to Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and had been brought over that afternoon. He took out the yellow sheet

and handed it to me. I read aloud its one laconic line:

“ Henry Clay Junior died 2:15 this morning.  
MENIFEE.”

I don't know how we all lived through the next three days. It was as though there was a death in each of our homes. Fairhope's community was stricken low. The Major, Miss Clara, Lucy Patton, and the body, arrived from Covington the next evening; and were met by Jacob Boardman, Judge Patton, Richard Marvin, and my father. That night the old Menfee mansion held all that was mortal of its heir and our bonnie preacher-boy.

I shall not attempt to give an account of the funeral in any detail. Fairhope meeting-house was crowded, and many were unable to get inside, that October day. The sun had been behind the clouds since early morning and as the people gathered for the service there was a slight rain. I have heard Richard Marvin preach scores of funeral sermons and all of them were strong — even beautiful in their messages of comfort. But I never expect to hear again such a sermon as he preached that day. His text was the first clause of Genesis 21:20, “ And the Lord was with the lad.”

He sketched Henry Clay's life among us, his natural gifts, and his great opportunities that came to prepare him for his life work. He reminded us how God was with the lad in plenitude and power and grace. “ And now,” he said, “ the lad

is with the Lord, and greater goal than this the world holds not."

Such comfort! Such hope! Such faith! As we listened, smitten low with grief, we were conscious of a healing calm and sensed the presence of the Great Physician.

When the procession left the meeting-house the rain had ceased, though the sky was still overcast. But as the body of Henry Clay Meniffee Junior was lowered into the grave the sun came suddenly out from behind the bank of clouds and the mellow light shining through the dripping trees cast a rainbow of great beauty and brilliance upon the eastern sky.



AS SOME TALL CLIFF



## AS SOME TALL CLIFF

THE name of Richard Marvin appears often in the annals of Fairhope church and most rightfully so, for of all our ministers this Godly man was identified with Fairhope the longest in point of time as well as closest in the blessed bonds that bind the shepherd to his flock.

Marvin was the preacher I first remember, both in our home and in Fairhope's pulpit. He was an all-round big man, and there was nothing small about him from his number eight hat to his number ten boots, from his strong mentality to his great brotherly heart. He was well equipped educationally, being an alumnus of our oldest college — the one founded by the great and good man to whom reference is made in the second chapter of these annals. Not only was Richard Marvin a graduate of that institution during the presidency of its founder, but he was also a pupil in one of the classes taught by that eminent scholar.

Large man that he was physically, Marvin was quite lame from an injury which he received when a boy at play. The remainder of his life he walked with a cane, and toward the close he used both a cane and a crutch. He was a strong preacher, possessing a resonant voice of much volume and a choice vocabulary of good, strong Anglo-Saxon words. Fluent of speech, he was also logical and coherent in his power of analysis; and he was capable when fully aroused of a sustained and im-

pressive eloquence. To this day — and it has been all of twenty years since I have heard him — I can recall distinctly a half-dozen or more of his sermons as to texts, illustrations, and even his line of argument. For example, he had an unique and exceedingly helpful sermon on the word “So.” He built the discourse upon three passages of Scripture in which the word occurred, as follows:

John 3:16 — “For God *so* loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Acts 4:1 — “And it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the synagogue with the Jews and *so* spake that a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed.”

Matthew 5:16 — “Let your light *so* shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

No one ever quite forgot this sermon, so uniquely and impressively did the preacher work out his emphasis on this little word, with applications to every day living that were wholesome, pungent, and pointed.

It has been my observation that some ministers are especially gifted in the conduct of funeral services, and of all the preachers I have known Richard Marvin was the most graciously gifted in this respect. A funeral sermon by Richard Marvin was memorable. It was worth going miles to hear. He was so well balanced, never stiff or formal as some

good and well meaning ministers are at such times. He spoke such ample comfort; his own faith was so unshaken in the goodness of God, and his sympathy with those bereaved was so unmistakable, that he kindled anew into flame the immortal hope that sometimes burns low in the breast of the bravest of earth. He conducted funerals in all sorts of weather, in all parts of our county, and for all kinds of people. He never refused to answer a call of that kind if he was able, and since he was seldom sick I doubt if he missed a half-dozen services in fifteen years.

Marvin was particularly effective in his conduct of funeral services for children, and when eight years old Lydia Lucy Walmsley was killed by a fall from a horse, his sermon assuaged a grief that prostrated her parents and smote the hearts of us all. She was the only child of Dave and Sarah Walmsley, and the apple of their eyes. She was a dainty little girl with an abundance of flaxen hair which curled naturally and fell in ringlets about her sunny face. Marvin had married Dave and Sarah, was often a guest in their home, and he could not have loved a child of his own more devotedly than Lydia Lucy. His grief was so poignant at the funeral that he controlled himself only by the exercise of strong will power; and his face was moist with tears throughout the service. He read from the eighth and ninth verses of the eighth chapter of Genesis: "Also he sent a dove from him to see if the waters were abated from

the ground. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her feet, and she returned unto him in the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand and took her, and he pulled her unto him into the ark."

"Lydia Lucy Walmsley was like the dove Noah sent out from the ark," he explained. "She flitted here and there among Fairhope's neighbourhood where everybody loved her and still she found no permanent resting place for her busy little feet. Like Noah, God put forth His hand and has taken her back into the heavenly ark; yea, to His own bosom. God's welcome to Lydia Lucy was ever so much tenderer than Noah's welcome to the dove, for He welcomed her as Jesus did the little ones in Galilee nineteen hundred years ago when He said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.'"

Thus it is possible to show something of this good man's manner of speech on those occasions when strong men and women are bowed to earth as a mighty wind bows the trees of the forest, but the large sympathy of the man and the atmosphere of his unshaken faith — these cannot be conveyed by the printed page. Marvin possessed in rich quality the shepherd heart without which no man, however gifted, can ever be a really great preacher. He was the kind of minister whom one instinctively turns to in time of trouble, and to be with him for an hour or so was to confirm the

strongest faith and re-establish the weakest in the great virtues of our religion.

Marvin also officiated at many weddings. He married hundreds of couples in northern Kentucky the twelve years he ministered at Fairhope and the additional years he resided at Covington. His fund of anecdotes and incidents growing out of his experiences at weddings, was well nigh inexhaustible. Out of a number I recall one in particular. Marvin was called down in the southern part of the county to marry a couple who were utter strangers to him. He made arrangements for a horse and buggy at a livery barn in Millersburg. Just as he was ready to drive away, he said to the liveryman who was a friend of long standing, "Now, I'm going to marry a couple this evening and I'll either pay you your regular price for this rig, or I'll give you half the wedding fee."

"It's a bargain!" said the liveryman. "I'll be satisfied with half the fee you get."

Marvin married the couple and after the ceremony the groom, a brawny six-footer, said, "Parson, I'm a thousand times obliged." And that was all there was to it.

Marvin got back some time the next day, and leaving the horse and vehicle in the barn, he said to the liveryman, "I'm five hundred times obliged to you."

"Yes, I know," said the liveryman, "but where's half the fee you promised?"

"That's it," answered Marvin. Then he re-

peated the groom's words. They both laughed heartily, and not a cent would the liveryman take.

Marvin was greatly blessed and most ably assisted in his ministry by his wife. Few ministers were ever so fortunate in their choice of a life companion. Mrs. Marvin was a help-meet of singular temperamental and spiritual equipment. She was genuine, affectionate, tactful, and wholesomely good to look upon. If her husband had been a much less efficient man and minister, his wife's strength and beauty of character would have carried him safely over many a shoal where otherwise he would have made ship-wreck. It was little wonder that our people loved Richard Marvin and his wife who never having had children of their own, poured out so bountifully their parental love upon their brothers and sisters in the Lord. They were in our homes in times of bitter grief and heavy disappointment, and their presence was like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. They rejoiced with us when we rejoiced, and wept with us when we wept. When Jacob Boardman was weathering his most critical financial storm and an assignment seemed inevitable, the Marvins came down from Covington and stayed for all of a week at the Boardman home comforting and heartening the household.

My father loved Marvin as a brother, and they were always happy in each other's company. They were about the same age and of similar tempera-



ment. I possess and greatly prize certain letters from that servant of the Christ which reveal both his friendship for my father and his strong pastor heart. They are almost too sacred to spread out upon a public page, and only because they reveal so tenderly the great heart of their author am I permitting myself to do what otherwise I should not for a moment consider. The first one of these letters was written to my father shortly after his defeat by a narrow margin as his party's nominee for Congress.

COVINGTON, Kentucky, June 2, 189—

*My dear David:*

I see by the *Enquirer* that you failed of nomination yesterday by six votes. I am sorry, for the Sixth Congressional district, that you lost; but I congratulate you on your defeat. Politics for men of your ideals, David, affords a great field of usefulness; but at the same time offers manifold experiences that are distasteful and even disgusting. I think I told you on several occasions of my regret because Garfield went into politics. To be sure, it brought him greatness and renown; but at the same time great sorrow, and it finally cost him his life. Yes, my friend and brother, you are the gainer; instead of having to settle every post office fight in your district, and being annoyed half to death by the same, you can walk over your fertile fields, sit on your wide verandah at Maple Shade, worship God at Fairhope meeting-house, and live and die in peace.

Hurriedly, but with affectionate regards.

RICHARD MARVIN.

The second letter I first saw after father read it all alone in his bed chamber and shortly afterward brought it to me. It was written three days after the funeral services that Richard Marvin conducted for mother.

COVINGTON, Kentucky, September 20, 189—

*My dear David:*

Since I have returned home you and your loss have been constantly upon my mind. I know how terribly lonely your lot will be until you reach that land where sickness never comes and death is unknown. You were a well mated couple, and after forty-five years of wedded life the world doesn't seem to hold much for you without her. That I know full well; but our Source of Comfort is all sufficient. Thanks be unto "The God of all comfort who comforteth us in all our afflictions through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." That's a great word, David, and best of all it is true! To pass through an experience as yours in serenity of faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, means that heaven is nearer and that the tug of earth is less perceptible. My dear friend, I shall bear you much in mind, and remember you often at the throne of grace and mercy. My heart goes out to you, David, and to every member of your family. God bless and keep you.

Fraternally and affectionately yours,

RICHARD MARVIN.

The third letter of Marvin's that I reproduce here grew out of the strange and almost tragic experience that came upon that noble man in his last years. Upon his leaving Fairhope after round-

ing out twelve years as minister, he had regular work for a while; then only occasional preaching appointments; and finally with the exception of funeral services, he was practically pushed aside and laid upon the shelf in the full splendour and mellowness of his strong, spiritual maturity. Only a few of the Fairhope folk knew the seriousness of the circumstances; among the number — naturally enough — were Jacob Boardman, Major Menifee, and my father — all three of whom endeavoured to help Marvin secure a church, but without success. It was in answer to a letter from father reporting his failure in this respect, and deploring the condition among the churches that made such a thing possible, that the letter which follows was written:

COVINGTON, Kentucky, December 8, 189—

*My dear David:*

I want to thank you for your very kind letter of recent date telling of your disappointments in failing to secure for me a call from Somerset Church. I do not know why, David, unless it is my age; but I am no longer in demand as a preacher, not even among the smaller and weaker churches. I would rather preach the Gospel than do anything else in the wide world, and I believe myself better able to preach with power and conviction to-day than at any other period of my life. I would feel this slight, David, even if I were of independent means. As it is, I am doubly wounded by the disposition of the churches to spurn my services. Even so, my brother, I want to say that I love the Cause to-day more than ever — if such

were possible ; and I shall praise God with my dying breath, even if that breath should have to be drawn in an almshouse, for His mercies and goodness to me and mine. Believe me, David, your grateful friend and brother in the Lord.

RICHARD MARVIN.

I do not know why a man like Marvin should be shelved as he was, and as other men like him have been. It is difficult to explain the fact that at the very time of life when a doctor's skill and a lawyer's knowledge is the most valuable, the minister is in so many instances relegated to the rear or thrust to one side and regarded only too often with a kind of pitying contempt. I have always been fond of young preachers, and much as I enjoy hearing them preach, their sermons rarely grip me as do those which have been filtered through a personality and life lived long and deep enough to test severely the truths which they preach. It may be that some people differ from me in this respect. I do not know ; but as I view it, a preacher even of ripe training and rare natural gifts does not attain his full preaching ability until fifty.

In reflecting on Marvin and the sad fate that befell him, I have endeavoured to recall some weakness that might account for his shelving in his latter years. I can think of but one possible defect : he could not make a ten minutes' talk nor preach a short sermon. His mental faculties bordered, perhaps, on the ponderous ; and for the first five or ten minutes of his preaching he was not especially interesting. As I recall him, he resembled a great

ocean liner that has to be pulled out from harbour by a tugboat to the open sea, and then proceeds to get under full headway and ploughs steadily and sturdily through the waters of the great deep. In the earlier years of his ministry this characteristic could scarcely be called a defect, in his later years I fear that it became such.

The sad chapter in Richard Marvin's life came as a consequence of his inability to secure a place to preach. God is his witness that he tried hard enough, only to fail. He found it necessary to do something to earn a competence that would keep him in his very modest mode of living, and it happened that a coffee plantation company, with headquarters somewhere in Mexico, secured him as an agent. One or two of the big men in the company Marvin had known years before; in fact, one of them a dozen years previous was a conspicuous figure in our national church councils and later prominent in politics. He had every confidence in these men and believed, of course, that the company was thoroughly reliable. Because of his wide acquaintance and the confidence every one had in him, Marvin successfully disposed of some twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of the plantation stock. In numerous instances the stock was sold in small blocks and among people who could only afford a small investment. It turned out that the so-called "big" man in the plantation company was a grand rascal and looted its treasury of two hundred thousand dollars, and made his escape

successfully to South America. It all came like a lightning flash from a cloudless sky, and Richard Marvin was stricken low by the exposure. He took his entire savings which was, I think, the commission on the stock he had sold — twenty-five hundred dollars in all — and pro rated it to the neediest of the men and women who had bought the stock upon his recommendation. Some of his old friends in Fairhope's community came to his relief both in a financial way and by sympathetic expressions of their friendships. But the thing broke Richard Marvin's heart. He never fully recovered from the blow. A little more than six months after the crash he conducted a funeral service in our county and contracted a cold from the exposure at the graveside, for it was a raw day in November. Pneumonia developed and in the early morning of the sixth day of his illness Marvin died.

His funeral took place in one of the large churches in Cincinnati. A great throng of people attended and there was an expression of grief sincere and widespread. Many of our Fairhope people were in attendance. Major Meniffee was a pall-bearer; and no sincerer mourners were there than that company that came across the river from the community where for twelve years Richard Marvin had been the bishop of our souls. There were some eloquent addresses made at that funeral; trained voices sang beautifully the hymns of the faith; and the great auditorium was redolent with the perfume of flowers. It was all very tender, impressive,

and richly deserved. Nevertheless, I could not but reflect that if the large and prosperous religious body served so acceptably by Richard Marvin for the best of his life had only provided for him even modestly in his declining years, the grief and the canker of the last six months of his life would not have been his to know.

One hymn sung at his funeral portrayed most admirably his sturdy character and his useful career. It is a hymn that was much sung in the early days of Fairhope and, always at the funeral services of our most faithful men. To this day I never hear the hymn without a thrill and an indefinable emotion. The second and fourth stanzas were our favourites.

“ Fallen — on Zion’s battle field,  
A soldier of renown,  
Armed in the panoply of God,  
In conflict cloven down!  
His helmet on, his armour bright,  
His cheek unblanched with fear —  
While round his head there gleamed a light  
His dying hour to cheer.

“ Fallen — as sets the sun at eve,  
To rise in splendour where  
His kindred luminaries shine,  
Their heaven of bliss to spare;  
Beyond the stormy battle field,  
He reigns in triumph, now,  
Sweeping a harp of wond’rous song  
With glory on his brow! ”

Mrs. Marvin continued to reside in Covington several years after her husband's death. Besides an unmarried sister who lived with her, one of her nephews made his home there while attending medical school in Cincinnati. Fairhope people kept her often in mind and scarcely a week past that some of us did not look in upon her. During the summer months she came down in the Fairhope community and visited for a week or ten days.

Whenever I was in Cincinnati and could possibly spare the time, I usually made a brief visit to the Marvin home. One afternoon I was persuaded to stay for supper and remain over night. We lingered long at the supper table and sat up late talking of old times at Fairhope, and of the younger generation that was coming on, and of the changes that had taken place in recent years. That evening Mrs. Marvin opened her heart to me and gave me the detailed history of the sufferings of her husband the last six months of his life. The iron had entered his soul, he had dwelt long in Gethsemane; but there was no bitterness in his widow's voice as she told the sorrowful story — only a calm, sweet constancy that greatly touched my heart. When I went up to my room it was close to midnight. I was weary but not at all sleepy. As I stood at the dressing table, my mind still on the vicissitudes that shadowed darkly Richard Marvin's last days, some objects in the corner of the room drew my attention. When I recognised what they were I



experienced a distinct shock. There resting against the wall was a *cane* and a *crutch*. I went over and touched them reverently. How many times I had seen Richard Marvin swing himself along by the help of that crutch and that cane! Passing strange it is to me that people go and things abide; that persons we knew and loved are gone from our sight and sound, and the things they used to touch and handle every day — the inanimate things — they are here and there and all about us!

I turned off the light and went to bed, but somehow sleep fled from me. For a long time I lay there recalling the scenes at Fairhope in which Richard Marvin had been such a vital influence for good. And when I did fall asleep it was to dream of what I had thought when lying there wide awake. I was in Fairhope meeting-house which was crowded to the doors. It was an anniversary celebration for our faithful preacher and Jacob Boardman was making a speech in the pulpit — a congratulatory address full of gracious tribute to our minister. I saw him take a roll of bills of large-sized denominations from his pocket and hand them to Marvin, who rose to receive them. Then Richard Marvin bent over and kissed Jacob Boardman on the cheek and I beheld them both weeping and the congregation also weeping. I wept, too; and then we stood and sang amidst our tears:

“Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love,”

just as we had sung it time and time again at Fairhope; and while we were singing I suddenly awoke to find myself in the Marvin home, and my face wet with tears.

I have long been fond of Oliver Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village," and an admirer of the lovely portrait he draws therein of the village parson in particular. I cannot say how many times I have read the poem, I suppose a half-hundred times at least. But this I know: never do I read the magnificent passage that concludes the author's tribute to the village preacher's rugged character and serenity of faith, but there comes between me and the printed page the face and form of Richard Marvin.

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

**WHEN POLITICS AND  
RELIGION MIXED**



## WHEN POLITICS AND RELIGION MIXED

IT has been a theory of our Fairhope politicians that religion and politics should not mix, and I bear our good men witness that it was unusual — partisans though we were — to bring party politics into the conduct of the affairs of church, or vice versa. With all of our partisanship, we were not a bigoted people even when party lines were more closely drawn than they are now. Richard Marvin was a Republican; and despite the fact that men of his party were scarce in Fairhope, our people were the soul of loyalty in their devotion to that noble minister of the Gospel. But regardless of our efforts to separate religion and politics, at least once we purposely set about mixing them thoroughly; and thereby appends an episode of our community life which has now become one of the traditions of the elders.

Most of our leading Fairhope men have been more or less identified with politics. Judge Patton was county judge for two terms; Carter Goodpasture served one term as sheriff; Major Meniffee was a member of the State Executive Committee of his party; David Westbrooke, Sr., was defeated by a narrow margin for Congress; and even Jacob Boardman served one term as magistrate. Politically, we are not divided equally. Four-fifths of our people are Democrats, and our exciting times

are not on the general election days but at the primaries where a nomination is equivalent to an election. I may be mistaken, but I have a conviction that northern Kentucky boasts more politics to the square foot than any other section of the Union.

In politics — as in everything else — some men are pronounced failures, while others are marvels of success; and alas! both the failure and success are often quite apart from individual merit. It sometimes happens that the best of men are the most diffident and commonplace campaigners. Fairhope numbered among its members such a man, by name: Jethro Walmsley. He was a modest, self-effacing sort of person; well past middle life; the very soul of honour; of kind and generous heart; but a more timid, retiring man never lived. In appearance he was slight of figure, with grey hair and beard and a fine patrician sort of face. Yet, notwithstanding his shrinking nature, Jethro Walmsley had for fifteen years nourished ardently an ambition to represent Boone County in the State Legislature at Frankfort. Three times he had been a candidate, and as often he had met defeat in the primary and with one exception he was the low man out of some three or four candidates. Insofar as ability was concerned, he was far better fitted by character and education to represent us than the man who defeated him; but as an electioneer he was a joke, though against the advice of his friends he persisted in canvassing the county from one end to the other. The result was, to use

Carter Goodpasture's words, that "everywhere he went he decreased his vote."

Walmsley's three defeats grieved him deeply, humiliated his family, and embarrassed his brethren at Fairhope. He was a faithful attendant at the church, a generous contributor, and in every way a man who deserved good things at the hands of the people. After his third defeat we hoped he never again would become a candidate; but lo! six months previous to the very next primary he again announced his candidacy for the legislature. For a brief time it looked as if he would have no opponent, and we rejoiced accordingly. But our joy was short lived. A resident of Petersburg, one Thomas J. Jackson, announced his candidacy for the same office; and Walmsley was thus assured of another contest. Immediately Jethro's friends throughout the county became worried, and our politicians in Fairhope church in particular, were disturbed. It looked like another defeat for the little grey man, so ambitious and yet at the same time so unobtrusive.

Major Meniffee and Judge Patton were not only close neighbours and fellow church members, but political cronies as well. Their interest in Walmsley's success was keen, and shortly after the announcement of Jackson's candidacy the Judge and the Major got together to discuss the bearings of his entry in the legislative race.

"Why that man Jackson will beat Walmsley, and Jethro has more manhood in one of his little

fingers than Jackson has in his whole body," observed Major Meniffee. "It's a shame, but it's a fact that most any scallywag in the county with a gift of gab and a slight degree of decency could beat Jethro Walmsley to a finish. What's your idea, Judge, about this race?"

Judge Patton reflected before answering. "Of course you're right, Major. Tom Jackson — even with his streak of yellow — will beat Walmsley three hundred votes. I have an idea. I'm not sure it's feasible, but I'll give it to you for what it's worth. Nim Hayden down in the South Fork neighbourhood, has wanted to run for representative for a number of years. All he needs is a little encouragement and a mighty little, at that. Now Nim's not a bad fellow in a way, but he's an infidel — at least he has that reputation; and if Nim should run, and Jackson stays in — Jackson's not a member of any church, he's sort of a brother-in-law, I believe — in a three cornered race of this kind Jethro could win out. The church people of this county won't take much stock in Jackson, and mighty few votes will Nim Hayden get in that quarter."

The Major looked thoughtful and smoked steadily, before replying. "Judge, do you think you can bring about Nim's candidacy and do it in such a way that it will not arouse suspicion? I know you can do it if anybody can."

"Yes, sir, I can accomplish it, Major. I don't relish mixing into this matter personally, but I



have a henchman or two down in the southern part of the county that will put a bug in Nimrod's ear and he'll do the rest."

"Then begin the battle, Patton; and count on me and any one of a half-dozen dependables at Fairhope to help you out if you need it."

So saying, the Judge and Major shook hands and the compact was made.

Judge Patton's plan, innocently operated as it was by apparently disinterested neighbours in the South Fork neighbourhood, worked wonders. A half-dozen of us in the northern part of the county were not surprised when one fine day the county paper carried the announcement of Nimrod Hayden's candidacy. At once the interest deepened and the political pot started boiling in earnest. The candidates for the various offices in the county plunged into a lively canvass. There was the usual interest and everybody talked politics. Hayden, Jackson, and Walmsley, with a score of other candidates, were on the go early and late. At every gathering of church and lodge, at public sales, and especially on court day, one could not toss up a stone without hitting a candidate. Fairhope folks were elated at Jethro Walmsley's outlook for victory. At last it seemed the coveted prize was within his grasp. That little grey man, diffident as usual, mingled shyly at the various gatherings, actually believing himself to be influencing scores of votes in his behalf. In truth, he was making no votes through his personality, but

for the first time in his life he was winning a constituency and all because one of the opposing candidates was a reputed infidel and the other not of the highest type of character. Jethro was greatly pleased with the rising tide in his political favour and became thereby not puffed up with pride but rather more self-effacing than ever.

Thus the campaign went on merrily with Walmsley's stock going up every day and a perceptible undertone of strong opposition to Hayden on the one hand and against Jackson on the other. The Judge and Major were jubilant and began to speculate on the size of Jethro's plurality. Then, just two weeks before the primary, a bomb shell in the way of unexpected news exploded in our community.

It happened that Judge Patton drove over to the county seat where he expected to spend the day, but his stay was shortened by several hours on account of a piece of information he picked up quite casually from a group of men who were sunning themselves in the court-house yard. After satisfying himself that the report was substantially true, he straightway drove over to Oak Knoll as fast as his fleet, well-bred driving horse could take him. The Major was on the verandah reading his *Courier Journal* when he saw the Judge drive up, and immediately dropped the paper and went to meet him, satisfied that his neighbour's call was of more than ordinary importance. Judge Patton reigned in his horse but made no move toward

getting out of the vehicle. It was plain to see that he was agitated. The two men shook hands as though they had been separated for years instead of for hours.

"Major," gasped the Judge, "upon my word, things have come to a pretty pass! Why Nim Hayden has joined the church!"

"What's that?" exclaimed the Major. "No, no, surely there's some mistake."

"It is true as Gospel," rejoined the Judge. "There's a big revival on at Antioch, and bless my soul! among the converts last night was Nim Hayden. The story's travelling on the four winds. You know what that means to the hopes of Jethro Walmsley."

The Major's expression of astonishment gave place to one of good-natured seriousness, and there was a trace of a smile on his face as he replied. "Judge, you and I ought to be ashamed of ourselves deploring the news of Nim Hayden's conversion. Assuming it's sincere, there must be joy among the angels over the coming of that man to the foot of the Cross. Only — I fervently wish he had postponed it until after the election. It will, as you say, affect our candidate seriously. When the news of his conversion gets out over this county it will make hundreds of votes for Nim and poor Jethro will be snowed under. If Hayden had planned this conversion as a part of his campaign, he couldn't have timed it better. What shall we do to head him off, Patton?"

"There's only one thing left to be done if Jethro's scalp is saved," rejoined the Judge. "I don't like to do it — I never have done it — and I hope I never have to do it again. We've just got to line up all our brothers in the faith in the county and vote our church solid for Jethro. We'll have to select a man in every one of our twelve congregations and put him to work for Walmsley. Yes, sir, we'll have to organise our brethren, Major, and vote 'em to a man. It's against both my religious and political convictions to mix church and state; but it's either that or Walmsley will suffer defeat, and it will just kill him if his present candidacy should end in a disaster."

"You're right, Judge," the Major approved grimly. "I don't like it either, but there's no other way now. Map out your campaign. I'll help you, and every other Fairhope man will take his coat off to save the day for Jethro. I don't believe Nim Hayden's conversion is genuine. Maybe I oughtn't to say that, Judge, but I feel that way just the same. Still, that's not here nor there now. We've got to save Jethro. But first of all, Patton, you get right out of the buggy and take dinner with me. After we've dined we'll plan this campaign in detail."

The Judge accepted the invitation and the two mapped out a campaign that was truly Napoleonic. As working capital immediately available, the Judge and Major had acquaintances throughout the entire county and were men of wide influence.

Their word was weighty and their support of any man was a movement significant in the county. They took a dozen trusty Fairhope men into their confidence at once and instituted a quiet, yet thorough canvass in every one of our twelve churches. The Major made it a point to have business matters call him to various parts of the county, thus giving him opportunity to do missionary work himself. The Judge was likewise a sojourner in certain sections of the county for as much as a day at a time, and busy from dawn till dark. At that time we had four resident ministers in the county and where it was possible and feasible these men did quiet but effective work among their brethren. The campaign rapidly reached a point where the interest was at a white heat. That Hayden's conversion had made an impression throughout the county and in some quarters had created a mild sensation, was only too true. For two or three days after, his stock went up by leaps and bounds. Had the election been a week after that eventful night of the revival meeting he would have swept the county like a prairie fire. The work of the Judge and Major was telling — no doubt of that; but even so, Hayden still looked like a winner and Walmsley's friends were uneasy. The primary was on Saturday and on the Wednesday before the county paper carried a notable biographical sketch of Jethro Walmsley. Whoever wrote it did a clever piece of work. His family connections were commented upon, his honourable career in the

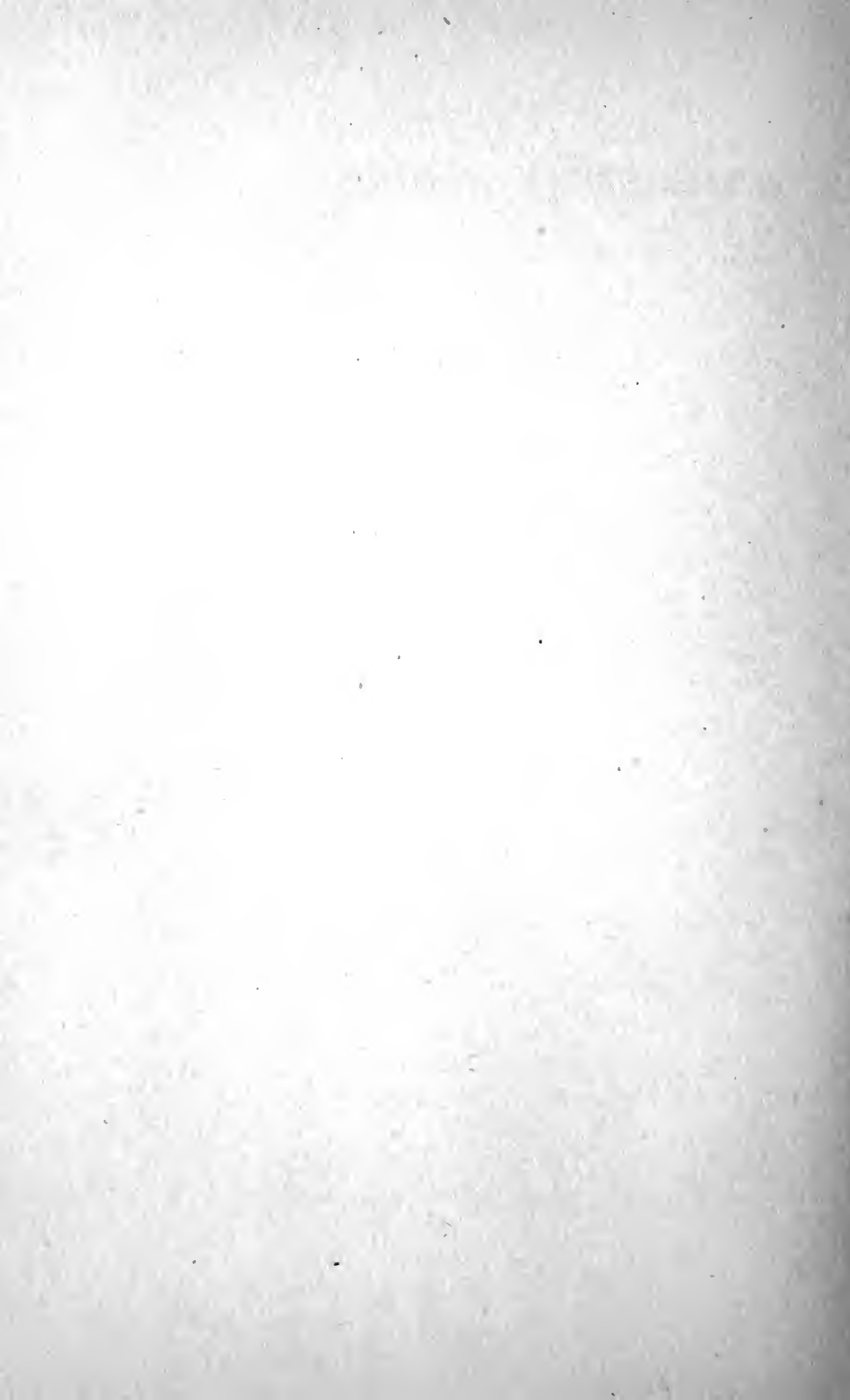
county pointed out, and the fact that he had been a Christian *all his life* was given a special prominence. Undoubtedly the article which was well written and true, did good service for Fairhope's modest, self-effacing, perennial candidate. Nevertheless, we were all anxious and by no means confident as to the outcome.

The day of the primary we worked like Trojans, determined that Jethro should get every vote in our precinct that could be honourably secured for him. And out of 180 cast there, he got 150, Jackson 6, Hayden 24. We received the returns from the primary at Beagle's store for it was before the days of the general use of telephones in our homes. The first precincts reporting showed Hayden running like a deer and confirmed our fears that the race would be a neck-and-neck affair. It was midnight before all the returns came in and not until the last precinct was heard from was the outcome certain. The final vote was

Jackson	405
Hayden	1002
Walmsley	1038

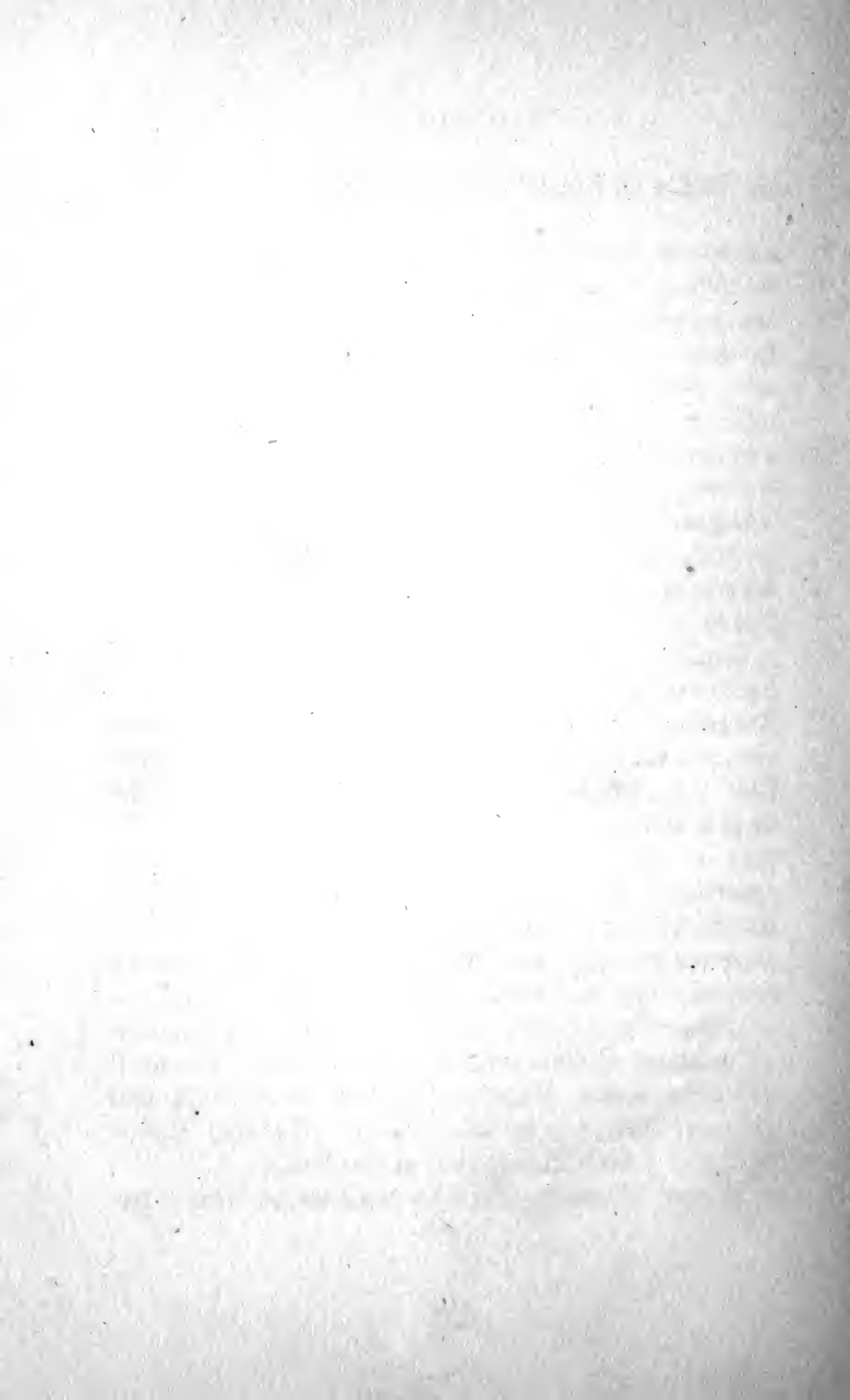
The Major mopped his brow when the finals were figured up and proceeded to fill his pipe afresh. As he fumbled in his waist-coat pocket for a match he ventured to address the Judge, who was getting into his overcoat. "Well, for once I guess politics and religion mixed a bit. Eh, Judge?"

The Judge chuckled deeply. "That's where you are wrong, Major. They never do, and nobody knows better than yourself that this campaign we've carried on had mighty little religion in it and a whole carload of politics."





# A MINISTER'S WOOING



## A MINISTER'S WOOING

HARMON VAUGHN was twenty-two years old when he became our minister at Fairhope. The first six months he served as a student preacher, since he was rounding out his senior year at the Seminary. After graduation he took up his residence in our county and for nearly five years he was our popular and beloved pastor. During that time Fairhope flourished as in the old days, and when Vaughn left us to go to a city church he took away something more substantial even than Fairhope's love and best wishes and left us sore and sick of heart because of a double loss.

Vaughn's first visit to Fairhope was on a bleak Saturday afternoon in January. We do not have Saturday preaching services at Fairhope now, but for two decades they were a feature of our church life. The women folk predominated at the Saturday meetings usually, though occasionally there was a fair attendance of the older men. The afternoon of Vaughn's initial sermon — despite the bleakness of the day — the audience was uncommonly large and representative of a Sunday service. We had been without a minister for several months and the rumour that a young student of unusual ability was to preach helped to swell the attendance. Vaughn was late in arriving and we were in our pews when he came in with Major Menifee who had met him at the river.

When Harmon Vaughn walked up the aisle,

went into the pulpit, and announced the opening hymn, the impression he made upon us was distinctly favourable. We saw a sturdy, prepossessing, young man; about six feet in height, and slender; with a frank, open face; a winsome personality; and the platform presence of a natural speaker. As the congregation rose to sing

“ There is a land of pure delight  
Where saints immortal reign,”

Carter Goodpasture was not the only one whose appraising eyes travelled back and forth from the wholesome looking young man in the pulpit to the fine figure and lovely face of Jennie Van Gorder in the choir. Goodpasture who was a horseman and given to expressing himself in the metaphors and simile of the track and paddock, after a survey of choir and pulpit, whispered rather noisily to Breck Shelby who sat by him, “ What a team of high steppers Jennie Van and the new parson would make ! ”

Carter's comment, however, was not extraordinary for he was a born matchmaker and when he should have been listening to sermons he was gazing about the congregation and picking out suitable pairs for the matrimonial market.

Jennie Van Gorder could not have been more than twenty when Vaughn came to Fairhope church. She was as pretty a girl as I ever saw. No description can do justice to her girlish grace and loveliness. She inclined to the brunette type with

plentiful meshes of what Major Meniffee called "raven tresses." And to quote the gallant Major further, "her cheeks were like roses in the snow."

The Major, himself, could not praise too highly Jennie's deep blue eyes or her adorable smile. Unlike some beautiful girls, Jennie was brilliant of mind; and best of all, she was thoroughly unspoiled, a sweet and sincere soul. Little wonder that she was an acknowledged belle and much sought out by beaux and gallants. During the four years Jennie spent in a boarding-school in central Kentucky she was a great favourite socially. She had circles of friends in Frankfort and Lexington, and there was a stream of young life coming and going continually at the Van Gorders. So far as we knew, her heart and hand were her own, though rumours were flying thick and fast about Jennie and her admirers. A young society man from Cincinnati — wealthy, attractive, and considered a great catch — was very fond of Jennie. His visits to the Van Gorder home were just as frequent as Jennie would permit. Then there was Winthrop of Frankfort — a dashing young lawyer who had lost his heart completely. And also a doctor from Louisville. But to remember all of Jennie Van Gorder's suitors, or to call the names of the young men in our community who worshipped at her shrine, would be too great a task for me.

We liked Vaughn from the first excepting, perhaps, Giles Shockley who thought he detected a

faint trace of heresy in parts of his sermons. Young and old were alike drawn to the young man. He was so human, so likeable. His popularity among us was marked and it grew rather than diminished the longer he stayed. Our older men began to father him at once; Major Meniffee, in particular. There was about this young minister something which reminded the Major of Henry Clay Junior, and it came about naturally and quite spontaneously that Major Meniffee assumed a sponsorship over Harmon Vaughn.

Young preachers interest me and I have made a study of them. I fancy myself able to discover on first hearing a young domine preach whether or not he was really called to be a Herald of the Christ. Harmon Vaughn was born to preach; he had the preaching instinct, and the prophet's fire. He was of studious habits; and in his early ministry, by industrious preparation, laid the foundation for a notable preaching career. His individuality was strong and a trifle eccentric. He was careful about his clothes and careless about his hair. In the five years that he preached at Fairhope I never saw him go into the pulpit wearing a mussed-up suit or soiled linen. He was far from a fop, but the most careful preacher about his attire I have known. Vaughn's hair was dark brown, straight, and he wore it rather long. He seemed in doubt just how to dispose of his troublesome locks as they rebelled against orderly arrangement. When he first came he parted his hair

almost in the middle. In a few months he changed the part to the left side and then — perhaps six months later — he changed it to the right side. When he got into the midst of a sermon the front locks had a provoking way of falling down into his eyes.

Harmon Vaughn fell head long in love with Jennie Van Gorder the first day he laid eyes on her. The humour of the situation was that while all Fairhope saw he was in love, that young man believed he was concealing the fact most adroitly. For all of a year our young preacher to a casual observer, was no fonder of Jennie's company than that of any of the other young women in Fairhope's community. He was discreet, and believed himself as sly as a fox in his love affair, deceiving even the elect. And all the while, by covert glance and eloquent gesture, Vaughn was publishing to the world the loss of his heart and head.

For a year Vaughn was ill at ease over the popularity of Jennie and quite despaired of a remote chance of pressing his suit. Scarcely a Sunday but some admirer of Jennie's was a guest at the Van Gorders, and prominent in their pew at church. Everywhere our preacher heard rumours of Jennie's engagement, either to the Cincinnati man, the Louisville doctor, or the Frankfort lawyer. Occasionally he visited the Van Gorders and sometimes took Jennie to a neighbourhood dinner, the county fair, or a Sunday School convention; but so far as he could see his chances for the

young lady's favour were decidedly slim. Jennie was radiant in his company, but to make love to such a creature when her heart was likely another's — this seemed impossible even to so ardent a lover as Vaughn would have been had he the opportunity.

Some of our good women unintentionally increased Vaughn's troubles by their gossipy speculations as to Jennie's matrimonial fortunes; and a few, I suspect, were purposely tantalising. Such a one was Aunt Matt Peebles who knew more about the matrimonial possibilities and the marital vicissitudes of Fairhope than any other resident, not excepting Carter Goodpasture. Aunt Matt was a widow of a few years duration; she had been a spinster of a much longer stretch of time. Spinsterhood had vexed Aunt Matt sorely, but she didn't mind being a widow in the least. She was a regular attendant at Fairhope and a loyal member.

"Nothing ever happens at church that Aunt Matt ain't Sally-on-the-spot," was Carter Goodpasture's characterisation of Mrs. Matt Peebles.

Aunt Matt never missed an opportunity to inform Vaughn that "Jennie Van Gorder is spoke for and good as married already." There was something almost malicious in the persistence with which she declared in his hearing that the belle of our county was wooed and won beyond the peradventure of a doubt. Vaughn whose nature was kind and affectionate — though quick of temper, was conscious of a growing dislike for Aunt



Matt and a positive dread of her presence. Once in the midst of his fears and doubts as to the possibility of his successful suit, he met Aunt Matt on the pike near the Van Gorders. He would have driven on but she reined in the flea-bitten grey mare and there was nothing for her pastor to do but halt his livery nag also.

"Good morning, Brother Vaughn. Nice day." Vaughn — calm on the surface but inwardly boiling — returned her greeting, but not so graciously as was his habit.

"Going to stop at Van Gorders to-day, I take it." Vaughn nodded his head in affirmation.

"Well, it's a good place to stop, but after Jinny's married that Looyville doctor I reckon it won't be so powerful attractive place to the young fellers. Do you?"

Vaughn felt like boxing the woman's ears soundly, and he was greatly relieved when after a few minutes' conversation she "allowed she'd better mosey on to market."

The second summer of Vaughn's ministry at Fairhope the rumours of Jennie Van Gorder's engagement were more numerous than ever. One day a funeral service took him to Florence and from there he drove over to the neighbourhood of Point Pleasant to visit a sick woman; thence to Major Meniffee's by way of the county seat. The day had been long and dismal enough for the young preacher. At Florence he overheard a group of women referring to Jennie's approaching

marriage to the Louisville doctor. A voluble visitor at the home of the sick woman in the Point Pleasant neighbourhood asked him point blank if it was not true that Jennie Van Gorder's engagement had just been announced in the *Courier Journal*. And at the county seat Vaughn learned that Jennie had been there a few hours before and the gossipy little village was assured that the engagement had been announced, only it was the Cincinnati man who was lucky instead of the Louisville doctor. Vaughn took fresh courage at this variation of the rumour, but he was thoroughly disgusted with himself and the world in general when he drove up just about supper time at Oak Knoll.

To this day there is no better place to drive dull care away than at Oak Knoll. Vaughn's spirits rose as he sat at the bountifully spread board and entered into an animated conversation with the Major and Miss Clara. The Menifees fascinated their young guest who was in dire need of the good cheer which the fine old homestead radiated. After supper the Major led the way to the wide verandah which runs the entire front of the house. The Major lighted his briar pipe which was a ceremony in itself; and after he had settled in a most comfortable and confiding mood, Vaughn felt that there never would be a better time for acquiring some information which he greatly desired. So as soon as there was an opportunity to introduce the matter without actually dragging it in,

Vaughn enquired quite incidentally, yet with thinly disguised interest, "Major, is it true that Miss Jennie Van Gorder is to be married?"

The Major took his pipe from his mouth. "Most assuredly." Vaughn felt his knees tremble. "Sometime, I reckon —"

Vaughn laughed outright and immoderately. His immense relief showed in his spirited reply. "Major, I mean soon. Tell me, is there any truth in these stories that that wonderful girl is engaged to the Louisville quack, that Frankfort pettifogger, or that Cincinnati Beau Brummel?"

The Major was startled at such vigorous language from the young preacher. He was much amused, too; though in his heart he approved of Vaughn's attitude. But he was provokingly deliberate in his reply and took several deep pulls at his pipe and blew the smoke in fantastic whiffs and rings. Just about the time Vaughn was on the point of repeating the question the Major spoke.

"My boy, you put an interrogation to me I can't answer. Only Jennie can answer that question, I reckon."

The Major grew reflective. "Marriage is a mighty important matter. It's a venture that one has to make by faith, sir. And when it comes to a minister of the Gospel marrying — so far as my observation goes — it either makes him or it breaks him."

The Major grew reminiscent and told Vaughn

how a certain minister of some distinction blasted a most promising ministerial career by an unfortunate matrimonial alliance. The Major related the episode with grace and embellishment. During the narrative Vaughn was ill at ease and scarcely waited till the end before he blurted out, "Major, do you think Jennie Van Gorder would make a practical wife for a preacher?"

The Major removed the pipe from his lips, laid a hand affectionately on Vaughn's knee, and replied with the emphasis of conviction, "Not only a practical wife, but an ideal one! For any man, sir, who is fortunate enough to win her! I have known her from the time she was a babe in her mother's arms. I know her stock, sir. I know her so well, sir, that if I were a young blood I'd look no further until I was turned down cold, sir."

Vaughn — in water far over his head — struck out now fearlessly. "Major, I do wish I had known this young woman sooner. It strikes me there's little chance for a preacher among these lawyers, doctors, and city bloods; and for the life of me, I can't say I've seen the slightest indication of her having any special regard for her pastor."

The Major refilled his pipe deliberately, tamped the tobacco gently with his middle finger, lit it with solicitous care, puffed awhile, and then answered as if from deep reflection, "Vaughn, I've lived a good many years, and in my younger days I was what is known as a ladies' man. In a sense,

I am still that kind of man; and will be till I pay the great debt of nature. I have observed that you never can predict how a woman or a jury will decide. But, sir, be sure of this: whenever a young lady notices the way a young gentleman parts his hair and is concerned thereby, put it down, sir, in black and white, she has some special interest in him."

The Major stopped. Vaughn hoped he would continue. This last observation was enigmatical. He waited for light but none came save the glow of the Major's pipe. He was on the point of asking the Major just what he meant when Miss Clara joined them and the topic of conversation was perforce changed. Vaughn pondered the matter further in his room that night and tossed about on his bed, unable to sleep. He decided he would quiz the Major further in the morning, but when he went down to breakfast he learned that his host had left unexpectedly for Cincinnati on urgent business.

Vaughn drove away in high spirits. He resolved to write Miss Van Gorder at once, and transfer to paper the sentences he could not trust himself to frame in her presence. That night he wrote the first draft of the missive that was to declare his love; and after spending the larger part of the next day in numerous revisions, he decided that the fifteenth was as strong as he could hope to compose if he wrote a hundred. There were ten pages and they told Miss Van Gorder of the

young minister's love for her from the day he first saw her in Fairhope meeting-house; and asked her to share her life with his. In a postscript he reminded Jennie that she had an engagement to accompany him on Wednesday of the next week to the county Sunday School convention at Petersburg where he was to preach the sermon. He suggested that she give him her answer at that time.

The momentous day arrived and Fairhope's minister appeared at the Van Gorder home shortly after dinner. He was driving a good looking livery horse which unlike most horses of that species, was inclined to be skittish. Vaughn was so spick and span that he seemed to have stepped out from the proverbial band-box. It was midsummer, the time of the year that is usually hot and dusty; but frequent rains had laid low the dust of the turnpike, the foliage was still rich in verdure, and the crops were particularly fine. As Vaughn and his fair companion drove through the gate and out on the turnpike it seemed to them that no day in midsummer could be more heavenly.

Vaughn was conscious of elation; he felt like a colt. Jennie was superb in all her fresh young loveliness, which was enhanced by a filmy dress of white embroidered muslin. They drove leisurely along, meeting only an occasional vehicle. Very soon Vaughn introduced Major Meniffee as the topic for conversation. It was a popular theme. They remarked on the Major's gallantry, his old-

fashioned courtesy, and his fascinating charm as a host.

"The Major is a gentleman of the old school," commented Vaughn, "and he surely takes a fatherly interest in me. Why, what do you think! He gave me some advice as to the kind of wife a minister ought to have."

Jennie glanced at him coyly. "Indeed!" she remarked. "How interesting!"

"Yes, he actually told me that when a minister marries it either makes or breaks him," rejoined Vaughn.

"Oh, he's a student of human nature," continued the young preacher, "and he does know a lot about ladies, in particular. He confided to me that nobody can ever be sure just how a woman or a jury will decide."

Miss Van Gorder's blue eyes were looking straight ahead, fixed apparently upon the flexible ear tips of their driving horse.

"And was that all the Major said?" she enquired demurely.

"Not quite. He said he had observed that whenever a young woman notices how a young man parts his hair you can put it down in black and white that she has more than a passing interest in him."

Miss Van Gorder made no reply, but gazed far across a field of corn and watched for a moment a flock of blackbirds flying noisily overhead. The road now sloped gently to the ford of a little

stream. Usually the water at this crossing was not a foot deep, but the recent rains had swollen the little stream until it was now some fifty feet in width and the water in places nearly up to the hub of the buggy wheel. They drove in slowly and were perhaps half-way across when part of the harness broke, dropping the shafts, and leaving the tugs and straps dangling about the horse's legs. Further progress was impossible and the horse gave evidence of fright.

"Of all places for a mishap, this is the worst!" said Vaughn.

Miss Van Gorder showed some evidence of concern. "Oh, what shall we do?" she cried.

"Only one thing to do," her companion rejoined. "I've got to get out into this water, quiet the horse, get him loose from the buggy, take him to shore, and come back for you."

And right there Vaughn showed how plucky he was. He removed his spotless cutaway coat and immaculate white vest, and handed them to the young lady. Then right over the wheel, went his patent leather shoes, his fancy hose, and neatly pressed trousers, into the water up to his knees. He waded to the horse's head, spoke a few words to the frightened animal, detached him from the buggy and led him out. Then he plunged into the water once more, took hold of the shafts and pulled the buggy and the fair passenger to the bank.

Miss Van Gorder was elated. "Well done,"



she said. "Why, you're capital, Mr. Preacher! You're equal to any emergency. But your wet clothes and the sermon you have to preach! What will you do?"

"Never mind about that," reassured Vaughn. "The important thing now is to find a piece of rope or cord. I'll have to mend that harness or we can't go on."

He searched through all his pockets; he looked underneath the high seat and even on the bottom of the buggy; but not the smallest piece of string could he find. Vaughn looked at his watch, then at the broken harness, then helplessly at Jennie Van Gorder. That young lady's eyes — always eloquent — were doubly so now with mystery. The cherry red lips moved.

"Mr. Vaughn, will you please look straight ahead till I call you?"

Instantly he turned his head away from his attractive companion and gazed "straight ahead." Afterward he remembered there were three cows, two horses, a mare and a mule colt in the field. After what seemed to him an exceedingly long time, Miss Van Gorder said, "Now!"

And lo! that young lady was holding out from her waist before his very eyes, a smooth white string. A trembling voice said, "Cut it off right here."

Somewhat awkwardly Vaughn produced a pen-knife and started to cut the string where Jennie's small fingers indicated. Then he stopped and

looked at her shyly and stammered, "Why, I mustn't do it, I —"

"Reverend Harmon Vaughn, you cut that corset string this minute, and mend that harness as quick as you can," she admonished.

And Fairhope's minister straightway did as he was told. He quickly mended the harness, hitched the horse again to the buggy, twisted the water out of his trousers as best he could, and very gingerly got back into the buggy so as not to allow his damp clothing to touch the dress of the young lady. They rode on for a hundred yards or more and neither spoke a word. Then the young lady spoke very softly, like the murmur of a mountain brook, Vaughn thought.

"Mr. Vaughn, you won't mind my saying it, I hope; but really I am sincere in asking this of you. Please don't ever part your hair on the right side again, or in the middle. Part it on the left side. It's more becoming there."

For a single second Harmon Vaughn looked startled, as if not comprehending what Jennie Van Gorder had said. Then an expression of complete understanding came into his eyes. He forgot to glance up or down the road; he did not deign to observe the fields on either side for farm hands who might be at work. Fairhope's minister forgot his wet clothes, his water sodden, patent leather shoes; even the carefully prepared sermon he was to preach that evening; forgot everything but Jennie Van Gorder. She was looking him full in the

face and the light in her eyes was such as only rapt young lovers can understand. Timidly, yet resolutely, Vaughn bent over and kissed the full red lips.

Harmon Vaughn and Jennie Van Gorder were married the following December. They had a church wedding, of course. And such a wedding! The spacious meeting-house could scarcely hold the hundreds who came for the great event. It was a very impressive and dignified wedding as, indeed, it had a right to be. There was no showering of rice, nor throwing of old shoes after the couple. The people remained quietly in their seats until the bride and groom had entered the closed carriage which was waiting to take them to Cincinnati. The Major and Lucy Patton witnessed the ceremony from the rear of the church and were the only ones privileged to extend their congratulations. Lucy's calm, spirituelle face was lighted with a sweet smile. "The best of everything for you both," she breathed. Then she kissed Jennie.

The Major's fine, old, ruddy countenance was aglow with love and pride. "God prosper you, my children," he exclaimed. "Vaughn, you lucky dog, take good care of her; Jennie, brush his hair, and ahem! by the way, here's a ball of cord in case of an accident."

Then he, too, kissed Jennie, wrung Vaughn's hand, and the carriage rolled away.

Vaughn fills a metropolitan pulpit to-day and

Jennie matches his brilliance with her winsome womanliness. Only last week I passed the Van Gorder homestead and I saw swinging on the gate a little boy whose deep blue eyes were precisely like his mother's. I also observed that his hair tumbled over his forehead after the fashion of his father's.

# THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH



## THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

HARMON VAUGHN's ministry marked high tide at Fairhope under the old order of things. The decline set in before he came and only his buoyant young leadership and his popularity postponed the inevitable. After he left, we had a half-dozen ministers for brief periods; some good, some indifferent, and all pessimistic as to Fairhope's future. Death began to take a heavy toll from the ranks of our older members. One by one our strong, dependable veterans answered the last roll call. More ominous yet, the young life to an alarming extent disappeared from the church services. Audiences dwindled and a listless atmosphere was observable at the morning meeting once so vibrant with worshipful values.

This condition was by no means confined to Fairhope. In fact, it was threatening the very existence of other churches in the county before it became acute with us. Two of the congregations in the southern section had disbanded and the meeting-house doors locked. Rural church life was sick unto death.

The years in their flight dropped the mantle of Fairhope's fathers upon her sons. In time it came to pass that George Van Gorder, Harrison Patton, and I were chosen to share the eldership with Major Menifee. The choice conferred responsibility as well as honour and the four of us took to heart the untoward condition of our historic

church. In place of looking forward to the Lord's day worship, we began to dread the droning, dreary service so different from what we had been accustomed to in Fairhope meeting-house. We elders held numerous informal meetings to determine what could be done to stem the tide that was beating at the citadel of our community life.

It was about this time that the religious press commenced to discuss the country church problems, devoting much space to editorial and articles on the subject. Conferences and conventions of religious workers were held in various sections of the State, seeking to stimulate interest in the country church. The Agricultural College and Farmer's Institutes took up the agitation, and the university at Lexington established a course in Rural Life Ideals in which the place of the church in the community was recognised as vital.

Some of our membership followed these discussions closely and were heartened thereby. Major Meniffee opened a correspondence with the president of the Seminary, laying the case of Fairhope before him. The result was that the president recommended one Roger Edgecomb for our pulpit and advised us to secure him if at all possible. He had made a study of rural church work and was fresh from a special course in community service. He was, we were informed, an experienced minister of middle age, a lover of nature, an out-of-doors man, and a bachelor. The advice of the seminary president impressed us favourably. In



fact, we grasped it as the proverbial drowning man at a straw. Roger Edgecomb was asked to visit us and the opening chapter of these annals describes the manner of his advent into my life and foreshadows the beginning of a new epoch in the community.

Edgecomb preached twice in Fairhope meeting-house and remained for a week, as he expressed it, "to tramp over the country a bit." He seemed to sense Fairhope's condition at once, but he took nothing for granted. He conferred fully and frankly with the elders, scrutinised the membership roll, and studied carefully what few records of the Sunday School we could assemble. He visited widely among the members and throughout the community, and finally made a two days' trip through the county with George Van Gorder in the latter's automobile. Then — and not until then — was he ready to talk business.

"The county is sadly over-churched," he reported. "There are twelve congregations. Three have shut up shop; five are in feeble condition; all are needing immediate attention. Fairhope is by far the best off; and there is, I believe, a future for it. I like your community. I am already in love with your hills, your vales, and rocks. You may not know it, but parts of this county constitute a birds' paradise. I'll come, but not for less than a three year period, providing you brethren will agree to do what I think ought to be done. An automobile — just an inexpensive runabout — is

a necessity in rural church work. As for salary: you may do one of two things, pay me \$1,200 a year and I will buy my own car; or I will come for \$1,000 a year and you provide the car."

After such a direct fashion Edgecomb made known the terms on which he would come. In Fairhope's palmy days these conditions would have been easy to meet; now they were difficult. However, with very slight discussion, we chose the second of his propositions and agreed to furnish the automobile. Four families of Fairhope guaranteed half of the new financial budget; and Roger Edgecomb — prophet of the new order — became our minister.

The matter of a boarding place for Edgecomb gave us some concern for he insisted (and rightfully) on a location close to the meeting-house. No suitable place seemed available until it occurred to me that the prophet's chamber at Maple Shade was occupied all too seldom these days. Why not invite the man to stay with us? The idea was capital! I lost no time in inviting him; nor did he in accepting the invitation. He came; and though little more than two years have elapsed, I can scarcely realise that Roger Edgecomb and I have not known each other all our lives.

The first change Edgecomb wrought was in the appearance of the meeting-house grounds. He directed that the high osage fence which enclosed the church lot like a jail wall, be trimmed immediately. The hedge had not been cut for many

years and had grown up tall and rank, quite obscuring the building from the passersby on the pike. Straightway the hedge was trimmed and the good lines of the commodious rectangular edifice topped with graceful steeple, stood out in full view of travellers on either pike or dirt road.

Next Edgecomb provided for the proper illumination of the grounds. A single oil lamp had aforetime served at the gate, but it had been out of repair for two or three years, and a dimly lighted lantern hung on one of the posts cast a yellowish ray about the entrance. Edgecomb saw that six strong gasoline lamps were supplied — two at the gate posts, the others at intervals about the grounds so as to flood the place with light even on the darkest night. This innovation invested the place with a fine glow of genial hospitality and caused an increased attendance at the night service.

There are two ante-rooms, one on each side of the main entrance to the meeting-house. They were long disused and as full of junk as an attic chamber. One of these Edgecomb cleaned out and converted into a nature library. He contributed some of his own volumes and secured others from the Agricultural College and the Federal governmental departments. There were books on birds, fungi, flowers, reptiles, animals, and a dozen good works of fiction with out-of-door settings. Edgecomb announced that these books were for the use of any one who wanted to read them. This

“ literary bureau ”— as Major Meniffee called it, was popular and fruitful. The people responded to the invitation with alacrity.

Edgecomb's sermons from the first were direct, practical, and brief. He preached the Gospel clearly and convincingly, with applications to everyday life more direct than we were accustomed to hear. He paid attention to the music, too, being blest with a good voice; and he arranged early in his ministry with us for a class in singing. He had not been in charge at Fairhope six months until we noted with deep joy the drift of young life into the services. A new interest was manifest. Our minister's little runabout was busy every day and often late at night. Slowly but surely, he established points of contact with residents of the community who had lost all interest in the church. At the village stores and neighbourhood gatherings the conversations turned easily into religious channels. There were many signs that indicated the church was coming into her own again in our section of northern Kentucky.

The children of the tenantry have as a class, been neglected by the country churches; and even Fairhope in the heyday of its strength was not active in securing the tenants' children for the Sunday School. Our church was accustomed to give one hundred dollars each year for foreign missions, which was good; but within a mile of our meeting-house were dozens of little chaps growing

up without education and for the most part lacking suitable clothing to wear to Sunday School. On the whole, we were strangely indifferent to this missionary opportunity at our very door. Edgecomb changed all this. He created a conscience among our members in this matter; while he, himself, was a tireless caller on the families of our tenants. At first they were a little afraid of him, but he completely won them over. The children — usually bashful and tongue tied in the presence of strangers — began to come regularly to Sunday School and became after awhile very much at home in Fairhope meeting-house. At the end of Edgecomb's first year Fairhope's Sunday School had broken all previous records, and an annex of some sort became a necessity. Never before were we so interested in the welfare of the tenantry, both white and black. It was a revelation to us, we had been blind to whitened harvest fields at our very doors.

The phrase "a community centred ministry" is one I often see in farm journals or hear at rural life conferences; but I never knew just what possibilities were wrapped up in those words until Roger Edgecomb became our spiritual leader. Then I beheld a great light. An incident of recent occurrence is to the point, though it is only one of the many of a similar nature. Edgecomb came into the house from a busy half-day spent among his parishioners. Pausing at the door of the

room where I sat writing, he called out, " Mine host, how would you like a pastoral report of the forenoon? "

" First rate," I answered.

" Then you shall have it; and in true sermonic form, at that. Firstly, there's a brand new baby boy down at Peter Shepherd's establishment (the Shepherds are tenants on a neighbouring farm), and I have secured the services of Mrs. Molly Young as long as she is needed there. Secondly, Uncle Tommy Townsend is in a bad way. Lumbago, rheumatism, pleurisy; Tommy only knows what! So I asked Dr. Hammond to take good care of him and send the bill to the treasurer of Fairhope Church. Thirdly, I punctured a tire down on Garrison to-day, and while I was repairing it big John Keeler came along and assisted me. He didn't say a single swear word the thirty minutes he was my helper; and he promised to be at service next Sunday, too. In conclusion, there is a flock of Cedar-wax Wings in the big trees in front of Jethro Walmsley's; I counted fourteen. They're beauties! You ought to see them! "

So saying, and without waiting for reply, he ascended the stairs to his room two steps at a time, humming " There's a little brown church in the Wildwood," as he went.

We have enjoyed the ministry of some great preachers at Fairhope, but they were not nature lovers such as is Roger Edgecomb. He loves the soil. " God's dirt," he calls it. And a favourite

theme with him is "The Soil and the Soul." I have heard him preach on that subject, lecture on it, and make it the theme of numerous informal talks. It was a notable day at the Farmer's Institute at Petersburg, when Fairhope's minister lectured on "The Soil and the Soul." It was the first time the people of our county ever heard their land and their Lord so wondrously and beautifully linked together.

"There are two elements in human life," he said, "the desire to live and the passion to perpetuate the race. Appetite and love are the controlling forces of society. The elemental desires of humanity are for food and happiness, bread for the body and bread for the soul. In the study of history we find two elements: the soil and the soul. The granary and the synagogue are the symbols of human life. There has never been a great civilisation without the soil and the soul. The ancient nations sprang up along streams and around bodies of water. Man has always had a religion. He is incurably religious. The story of the Garden of Eden is an interesting illustration. Genesis is the book of beginnings. In the beginning of the race we discover two things: the soil and the soul. God is the great Horticulturist. He planted a garden eastward in Eden. He created man in His own image and made him the keeper of the garden. From that day until this, both elements have been present in world growth. We need food for the body and food for the soul."

In order to win the young life in the community for the church, Edgecomb mingled freely with the young people at all sorts of gatherings. He even made bold to attend the Harvest Home assembly where dancing was a popular feature. Some of the ministers in the county had assailed bitterly these dances and condemned vigorously the young people who took part in them. Edgecomb did not give the dances at the Harvest Home his approval; but he made it a point to drive into the grounds along toward the close of the festivities and in a friendly manner — free from the least suspicion of a patronising spirit — made the young people know that he was interested in them and had at heart their highest good. So it came about naturally that the young life began to centre again in Fairhope meeting-house. In a few months young people were conspicuous in all the services; and when for the first time in Fairhope's history ushers were selected and assigned their places, it was young men who were chosen for that important work.

Still more significant in the changing order of our community's religious life was an incident of Edgecomb's first year's ministry at Fairhope. As has been observed in other chapters of these annals, we are immersionists; and our churches are stout defenders of the baptismal ordinance according to the practice of the Apostolic Church. Practically all the debates and much of the controversy centred about this ordinance and its ob-



servance in conformity to New Testament teaching. Shortly after Edgecomb began his ministry at Fairhope, a family by the name of Hanford moved into our community. They were very active Christians and had been useful members of a church which baptises by affusion. From the first the Hanfords entered into our services with enthusiasm. The husband and wife had letters from their church certifying that they were members in good standing, commending them to the Christian love and over sight of the congregation wherever the letter should be presented. There were three children in the family ranging from eleven to eighteen years of age, and the advent of the Hanfords into a most active interest in the Sunday School and all the services of Fairhope was almost epochal. One day about six weeks after they had been worshipping at Fairhope, Mr. Hanford called to see Roger Edgecomb and handed him the church letters.

“Brother Edgecomb,” he explained, “I know the custom of your church to receive into fellowship only those who have been immersed. Now we want to work with your congregation here. In fact, we are already working with you, and are in heartiest sympathy with all your plans for a community church. We expect to pay and pray, to work in the Sunday School, and assist in every way in the Lord’s work; but neither my wife nor myself can see any reason for being rebaptised. Please take these letters, keep them for us, and if

we should leave this community return them to us."

Edgecomb took the letters, and the next Lord's day he called a meeting of the elders. He related to us the incident and repeated as nearly as he could recall the words of Mr. Hanford's request. Seldom have I seen his face more serious or his manner of speech more earnest.

"Men, I've been wondering what I ought to do about these letters," he said. "Just here is a subtle and difficult point in the building up of a community church. These people are not ready to go all the way with us doctrinally; but they love the same Lord, and they are already among our most zealous and competent workers. All they ask is to be allowed to work side by side with us. They are not asking any other recognition than that of fellow-workers, and not that publicly. It is probable that similar cases will come up from time to time in the rebuilding of our Christian communities. I believe we ought to meet this issue frankly and decide now what our policy shall be. After some reflection I have a suggestion: Suppose I state to the congregation just what Mr. Hanford stated to me when he handed me the letters; and further, that I speak our hearty appreciation of these Christian workers and voice the belief which I fervently cherish that in circumstances of this kind it becomes us to practise the unity of Christian service wherever possible; and that out of such practice other unifying processes

may rightfully be expected to follow. Of course, I could keep these letters and say nothing about them publicly, and the Hanfords would go on working with us just the same. But it occurs to me that to make some simple statement of the fact as I have suggested is more brotherly and just, and perhaps may help to solve this knotty question of an enfeebled religious life in the community. What have you men to say about it?"

We listened closely to our minister's earnest presentation of the case. There was not a man of us but realised it touched the heart of a serious condition which had grown more deplorable in recent years. We were filled with a lofty hope that out of this simple and informal recognition of the Hanfords as fellow-workers in the kingdom of God there might accrue a still deeper unity in a common faith. Consequently there was not a dissenting voice among us; but instead, an unanimous approval of the minister's suggestion.

The following Lord's day morning Mr. Edgecomb made a statement before the congregation similar to the one made in the presence of the elders, and heartily approved by them. When he had finished and we arose to sing the closing hymn, "Bless be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," it seemed to some of us that we were back again in the days of Fairhope's former strength and prosperity, for the glory of the Shekinah filled the meeting-house.

One night recently I chanced to pass Fairhope

meeting-house on my way to the city. It was a week night, yet a crowd was assembling for a lecture and sociable. The grounds were flooded with light; the meeting-house windows glowed hospitably; and from a throng of young people there floated out upon the fragrant air fresh young voices in pleasant conversation, mingled with ripples of merry laughter. With a joy in my heart too full for words, I drove cityward. Fairhope's future was big with promise, and my cup overflowed.

# A PROPHECY IN GOD'S ACRE



## A PROPHECY IN GOD'S ACRE

As turns and twists the pike road, it is all of two miles from Maple Shade to Fairhope; but across the intervening fields and by paths familiar to me, it is little more than half so far. I have always been something of a pedestrian; quite unusual, too, in a community where men and women prefer to ride or drive even to the nearest neighbour. It is my love for tramping about the fields and along the pike that inspired one of our negro tenants to describe me as "the walkin'est white man in Kentucky." My tramps take me often past Fairhope meeting-house, and sometimes I stop for rest in the shade of the lordly trees, and for a period of reflection in the nearby plot where sleep so many whom I have known and loved in the flesh.

Since I began these annals almost a twelve-month has passed. Spring is later with us this year than usual; and though May is ten days old, only within the past week has the full tide of the season's loveliness burst over northern Kentucky. As if eager to compensate for the delay in genial glow of sunshine, glory of wild flower, and ecstasy of bird song, nature is fairly prodigal now in her lavishness.

Yesterday afternoon was still young when I set out for a leisurely stroll in the direction of Fairhope. The migrants are tarrying in these parts, loath to leave such bowers of beauty as abound in the deep ravines and cool, sequestered tangles of

underbrush. Yesterday the warblers were especially numerous and my progress was therefore slow. Often stopping to watch a familiar bird, and occasionally led aside in order to get a good look at a rarer species, I was a full hour reaching Fairhope. I paused beneath the grateful shade in front of the meeting-house before entering the grassy area where Fairhope's membership is more numerous than on her church roll.

Of all the names applied to the place where repose our dead, I like "God's Acre" best. The word "cemetery" is formal, and "graveyard" is a cold and heartless term. But "God's Acre" is full of comfort and to me a phrase of uncommon tenderness. Fairhope's "God's Acre" is rightly praised both for its natural beauty and for the care bestowed upon it by the deft hands of our men and women. It occurs to me that where ever man gives thought and care to a burial ground, God Almighty surpasses him in wealth and wonder of trees and grass and wild flowers. Our neighbourhood takes a just pride in caring for the hallowed area west of the meeting-house; it is well kept but not so as to mar a certain wild beauty which in early spring and midsummer is seen at its best.

There is a rustic bench to the left of Colonel Fairhope's grave and nearly opposite the Boardman lot. Thither I went, and scarcely had I sat down when I detected the tang of tobacco smoke and simultaneously I heard footsteps. Only one



man in the community smokes so fragrant a leaf and I was not surprised, but very glad, to see Major Meniffee shortly after enter the gate. He saw me at once.

"Ah, Davy," he hailed, "you here, too? Well, sir, it's a good thing to visit this place at times other than an interment."

My hand met the Major's in a clasp of singular warmth. We sat down together. The Major removed his wide-brimmed, bell-crowned hat, and tossed it on the ground at his feet. "Davy," he queried, "do you come here often?"

"Yes, Major; frequently in spring and autumn."

"Strange," he reflected, "I haven't met you here before. The truth is I've been coming a great deal of late myself. This evening I brought a mare over to be shod and I decided I could spend the time more profitably here than at the shop. It's a good place to reflect; quiet reigns, and it's far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife. Davy, there's a verse in Ecclesiastes which I used to regard as a bit of pessimism; but, sir, I'm comin' to think highly of it. You'll recall the verse, 'It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting.' There is a wholesome philosophy in that, Davy. There is something wholesome, sir, in such a blessed vista as this."

The Major spread out his arms in a gesture which took in the entire cemetery.

"You and I think alike on such subjects," I assented. "Never shall I forget a June day when I visited Stokes Pogis."

The Major's eyes sparkled, for Gray's Elegy was one of his favourites.

I continued, "Major, this spot means to you and me all that any beautiful, well-kept God's Acre means and infinitely more."

"That it does, Davy. We are at home here where Fairhope is so eloquently represented. Think of it! Jacob Boardman, Franklin Van Pelt, Judge Patton, Luke Van Gorder, Giles Shockley, your mother and father, Davy; my father and mother, my wife, my son —"

The Major's voice faltered. He did not go on. His pipe had gone out, but he did not relight it. A slight breeze was wafted from the West laden with the fragrance of honeysuckle. From a tree somewhere beyond the hedge row a Maryland yellow-throat sang, "Witchity-witchity-witchity;" and a meadow-lark flying low overhead carolled his cheerful, "'Tis sweet to sing! 'Tis sweet to sing!"

The Major did not speak until he was sure of himself, and then he was in a reminiscent mood. "I have lived to see this place become populous. Many's the time I have heard Richard Marvin pray at open graves here. Davy, did you ever know his like when it came to talking to God Almighty as a little child might talk to his mother? Did you ever hear it done as Marvin did it, Davy?"

I shook my head. "You never have and you never will," affirmed the Major solemnly.

"No, Major," I replied, "there was only one Richard Marvin. Thank God we were privileged to know him so long and intimately. He was and is part of Fairhope's glorious history. Nor will there ever be just such another rural church as Fairhope, Major. There will be better churches perhaps, and more efficient congregations; but not of the Fairhope type that flourished thirty years ago. The age is new and the times are different; and, Major, God has men for every age. As Richard Marvin was in his day, so Edgecomb is in this day. I want to believe that with the passing of the old order of rural church life the glory that lighted up yonder meeting-house with an unearthly glow, will abide and must abide wherever God is worshipped in spirit and in truth."

The Major let his eyes rest long and affectionately upon Fairhope's meeting-house before replying; stroking slowly his white goatee, a habit of his that betokened deep reflection. When he did speak his voice was low and reverent-like.

"Well spoken, Davy. God bless us both! We are optimists to the core! Davy, the old customs are going out. The fact is, I never take my toddy in the presence of my guests any longer. I'm actually abashed to be seen drinking a mint julep, Dave. Times are different and standards of living are changing. The country's going dry fast, and it's all for the best. Why, sir, I believe with you

that Fairhope's best days are in the future — not in the past. For one thing, our church never has done full duty by the tenants. Edgcomb has opened our half-closed eyes wide, Davy. And, sir, I have faith in the future of this county. Old Boone is going to renew its youth like the eagle. Just now this section of Kentucky is at a low ebb; but the tide is bound to turn. A more picturesque corner of the State than this cannot be found. And such scenery! Davy Westbrooke, you and I have travelled some; but where is there such another sight as our great river hill a mile in length with the turnpike winding about like the coils of a great serpent? And the view from the deep centre of the biggest bend: a wonderful vista of the Ohio Valley and the majestic rivers, the boats, and the high hills apparelled in God Almighty's green! Then there is the panorama that greets the eye from the big hills above Petersburg; the fertile valley farmland, the little town nestling among the trees, and beyond the winding river, the Indiana bottoms, and in the distance the farther hills glorified with the haze of heaven. Why, Davy, it is God's own country, is this northern Kentucky."

The Major's speech, which had begun low, finished in deep, full tones. It was a long speech even for him. I waited for him to continue as I was deeply stirred. But the Major arose, and I with him. He slipped the pipe into his pocket and linked his arm in mine. He led me a short distance to a nearby plot where flowers were blooming in a tan-

gle of vine and leaf; and gently halted me before a square, substantial block of granite with the inscription I knew by heart:

HENRY CLAY MENIFEE JUNIOR

BORN FEBRUARY 2, 1868.

DIED OCTOBER 28, 1888.

"CHRIST SHALL BE MAGNIFIED IN MY  
BODY, WHETHER BY LIFE OR BY DEATH."

PHIL. 1:20.

The Major stood uncovered and erect, like a soldier at attention. But I could feel the tremble of his arm resting within my own, and once he heaved a deep sigh. The place was very still save for the slumberous, restful murmur of bees busy among the myriad blossoms.

"Davy, are you familiar with 'Gene Field's 'The Singing in God's Acre'? enquired the Major, still erect and looking straight ahead.

"I have read the verses, though I cannot recall them," I answered.

"Well, sir, a verse of that poem expresses my emotions whenever I leave this place."

The Major's rigid figure relaxed. "I feel like speaking them out loud as though every resident of this place were listening:

"Sleep, O sleep,  
The Shepherd guardeth His sheep.  
Fast speedeth the night away,  
Soon cometh the golden day,  
Sleep, weary ones, while you may,  
Sleep, O sleep."

As he spoke the lines with deep feeling, the Major turned his head and his brave old eyes swept slowly the entire enclosure, resting in tender gaze as he finished upon the grey stone in front of him. Then again the silence fell upon us, only to be broken shortly by my companion's hearty, "Come, go home with me, Davy."

Slowly we walked toward the pike road, our feet sinking in the soft-tufted earth at each step. As we passed through the gates with the shining lamps on either side, a saucy chuckle followed by a low musical whistle fell athwart my ears. It was as though an old friend had flung me salutation. Turning my head quickly, I caught a glimpse of a yellow-breasted chat as he dashed from the hedge row and darted into a deep tangle of foliage at the rear of Fairhope meeting-house.

THE END

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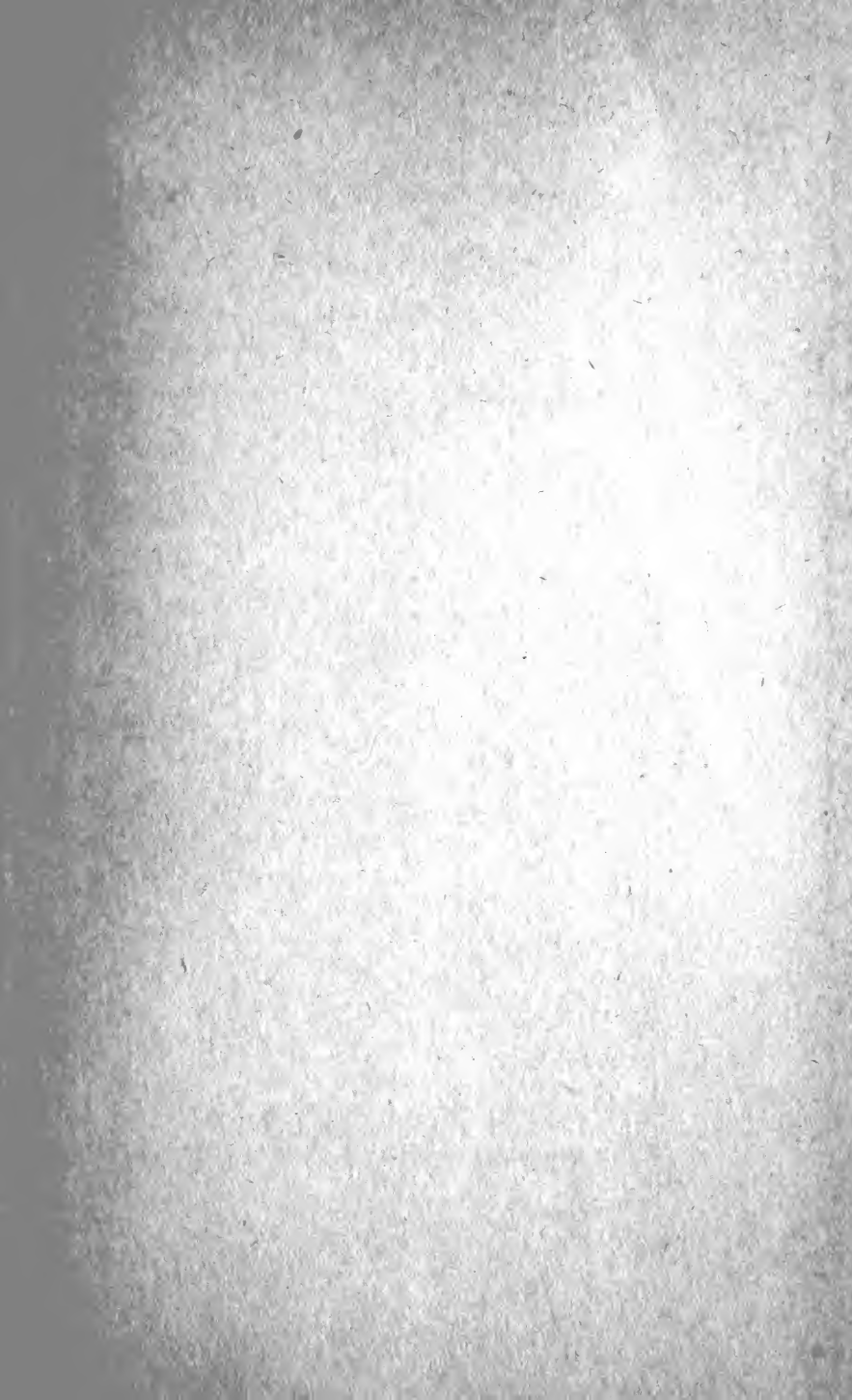
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